

THE WEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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LA METRO KICKS OFF AMBITIOUS PLANS
FOR UNION STATION

STATE OF THE UNION



After buying LA's Union Station in April, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has wasted no time putting the site to use. On July 13 it kicked off the process of soliciting planning proposals for a redevelopment of the 42 acres of land it

owns around the station, a project that instantly became one of the most important development zones in Southern California.

The Union Station Master Plan Industry Review, which took place at Metro Headquarters, drew **continued on page 10**

PROJECTS STALL AS FUTURE OF
CRA HANGS IN LIMBO

CATCH 27

After months of pleading with the governor and the state legislature, California's Redevelopment Agencies have been spared complete dissolution—for now. But their

status and their pending projects are now in limbo until the state's cities decide whether to keep the agencies by paying what the agencies have called a "ransom" to the state.

In late June the legislature passed AB X1 26, which dissolves the state's Redevelopment Agencies by October 1, and an attached bill, AB X1 27, which prevents dissolution if cities pay their prorated share of \$1.7 billion by the end of the year, and millions more in future years, to allow the **continued on page 9**

Pasadena's Del Mar Transit Village would have required far less parking under the proposed changes.



LA CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

LA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVES
MODIFIED PARKING REQUIREMENT DISTRICT

PARKING SMART

In a sprawling city like Los Angeles, cars are still the primary means of transportation. More cars mean more parking. Sometimes too much, other times not nearly enough.

In an effort to remedy the situation, on July 14 LA's City Planning Commission recommended the creation of a Modified Parking Requirement (MPR) District, aimed at solving the city's varied parking needs.

"Generally, we have a one-size fits all parking code for all **continued on page 6**

O'HERLIHY UPDATES FAMED
PHOTOGRAPHER'S HOUSE



LOHA

Shulman 2.0

Next to the front door of photographer Julius Shulman's house sits a plaque stating that the property is Los Angeles Cultural Historic Monument #325. It's a well deserved designation. The legendary home was not only the stomping grounds of one of the most famous chroniclers of the modern movement, but its indoor-outdoor design, which frames the site, was created by one **continued on page 5**

DEVELOPERS ISSUE:

AS NEW RAIL AND SUBWAY LINES SPROUT UP IN CALIFORNIA AGENCIES TAKE ADVANTAGE BY CREATING TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENTS. SEE PAGES 12-15.

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FALSE STARTS FOR CLEANTECH



Early rendering of the Arts District Park.

JF&K

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

The Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) continues to face roadblocks in creating a Cleantech Corridor and Green District, a 2,000-acre development zone on the eastern edge of downtown Los Angeles conceived as a manufacturing base for sustainable industries.

The area was first envisioned in the fall of 2008 and was heavily supported by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa as "the cornerstone" of his "vision to put Los Angeles at the forefront of the clean tech revolution." The corridor runs from **continued on page 10**



BROOKS + SCARPA'S ARTSY NEW
PARKING GARAGES IN SANTA
MONICA. SEE PAGE 8

JOHN EDWARD LINDEN

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ARCHITECTURE IN THE STREETS

All across the United States, architects and designers are badly frustrated by a sad economy, timid clients, dwindling public funds, and bureaucratic systems that make any project into a multi-year affair. My suggestion: Stop waiting. Just do something, anything—temporary installations, neighborhood improvements, pocket parks, street furniture.

If you look around some big cities, it's already happening. My favorite example is the "parklets" program in San Francisco, which consists of 15 mini-parks on tiny pieces of city-owned land. The parklets are part of the City Planning Department's "Pavement to Parks" program, which looks to build parks on "wasted" parcels like rights of way and extra-wide streets. Another SF program, "parkmobiles," consists of portable landscapes of trees, ferns, and shrubs in red steel bins with adjacent street furniture that will be rolled out in the Yerba Buena Gardens. The city also hosts the "Proxy" project in Hayes Valley, a temporary retail village made of shipping containers until the real buildings get finished.

This DIY architecture and landscape movement is also unfolding elsewhere. Houston, New York, Chicago, Dallas, Portland, Memphis and other cities have experimented with "Better Block" programs, a grassroots effort of nonprofits, business owners, and neighbors to create temporary projects to encourage people to get out of their cars and enjoy their neighborhoods. Park(ing) Day now takes place in most of the major cities across the country, where parking lots are converted into parks for a one day a year. And Philly has gotten in the game too, creating mini-parks and art installations in its University City area.

Local governments should be encouraging such behavior with more gusto. Why not take advantage of a hungry set of designers who can make their cities more livable? In California, while SF's planning department has made a great start, its downstate sister LA is lagging. Granted, the city has helped create some great new parks, including the Cornfields and the Vista Hermosa Park, both near downtown; non-profits and schools like Materials and Applications and SCI-Arc provide a home for installations; and some advocates are trying to install pocket parks throughout the area. But the city doesn't have any regular program to spur inventive urban transformations.

Until this happens, I propose a new, possibly unorthodox, approach: guerilla architecture. Just as street artists have managed to legitimize their work and have changed much of the landscape of LA and other cities, architects can do the same creating what we can call "street architecture."

The work can provide a showcase for new talent while making our cities more dynamic and approachable. There's so much wasted space that could use an intervention to make people see it differently—not only rights of way and wide streets, but also surface parking lots, which take up more space in our cities than they ever should. Imagine these becoming usable spaces in the urban environment.

In the current climate, how much more satisfying is it for architects and designers to create something immediate and tangible instead of continuing to work on virtual concepts for competition entries and other projects that may never see the light of day?

How can architects be proactive in transforming LA and other cities? Ask a neighborhood non-profit or museum what it needs and start a Kickstarter fund online. Find a way to creatively use scraps from old projects to create an installation in a public space. Ask a client if you can use an empty storefront or lot for your project. Of course, be sensible and don't do anything that will be dangerous or harm public or private property. There's a good chance that your city may take what you've built down. But just maybe they won't. So let's get to work. **SAM LUBELL**

HOPING FOR RECOVERY, THE WEST POSTS MODEST GAINS

BILLINGS DOWNER

The latest Architecture Billings Index (ABI) dropped from 47.2 in May to 46.3 in June. The drop represents the third straight month of decline, with last month's low already the worst since February 2010 when the ABI was 44.8. "Every month, I keep waiting for it to break loose, but it wasn't in June," said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker. He pointed out that economic and political issues beyond the industry inevitably take their

toll. Daily headlines, like the President and Congress wrangling over the debt ceiling, could lead to higher borrowing rates for real estate projects, spelling potential catastrophe for the sector should they then default.

The reality remains a bit more diverse than numbers might suggest. More than a few firms report that they are signing more contracts and that the work stream is getting steadier. "Comments from architects are all over the board," said Baker. "Some say it was their best year ever, and others are more like, 'What recovery? I haven't seen work in a year!'"

Perhaps the biggest regional surprise was that the West, which has been floundering for some time, came out on top as the only area pulling positive numbers (any ABI number below 50 is considered negative). The region went from 49.3 in May to 51.7 in June. The South dipped negligibly from 47.5

to 47.3, while the Northeast also slipped a fraction. The Midwest continued to decline, going from 45.9 to 44.6.

In the sector breakdown, mixed practices rose substantially from 45.2 to 51.7, while commercial/institutional broke through to 50.0, up from 46.5. Multi-family residential didn't fare as well, dropping from 53.6 to 49.6. Institutional shifted from 44.9 to 45.9.

If any good news was to be gleaned from the report, it was that project inquiries jumped from 52.6 to 58.1. Does this mean relief is in sight? Baker reacted cautiously and explained the discrepancy of bad billings alongside a lift in inquiries. "In general, better inquiries rise in association with better billings, a month or two down the road, but it is also typical for inquiries to be all over the map." **TOM STOELKER**

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BUILDING IN CONTEXT



Photo by Steve Wanke

As architect of the JELD-WEN Field renovation in Portland, Oregon, AECOM created an electric atmosphere for Major League Soccer in the heart of the city. The transformed stadium invites the public into its plazas and fans onto the pitch, connects to transportation and strengthens a vibrant downtown community.

Building in context means architecture with a view to infrastructure, ecology and local culture, to the full process of project delivery and to the perspectives of our partner disciplines.

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER AUGUST 17, 2011

EAVESDROP> THE EDITORS

GOOGLE PLUS

After Apple unveiled its plans for a spaceship-like new headquarters by (we think) **Norman Foster** at a recent Cupertino city council meeting, it appears that their chief rival is looking to outdo them. We hear that super-green German architect **Christoph Ingenhoven** will design the addition to the massive GooglePlex in Mountain View, CA. According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, the company has already leased an additional 9.4 acres from the city at a price of \$30 million.

FRIENDS FOREVER

Ah, Facebook, where the living commune with the dead. It has come to our attention that the architecture critic **Reyner Banham**, who died in 1988, seems to have a very popular Facebook page. In fact Banham, author of world famous *Architecture of Four Ecologies*, has over 600 friends, who like to post on his site as if the man were still alive. "Thank you for adding me. I am a fan of your work," said one Banham admirer. We sent "Reyner" an email—still no word back.

MACK STRIKES BACK

In the wake of **Michael Kimmelman's** appointment as architecture critic at the *New York Times*, the AIA California Council encouraged architects to weigh in on "What Makes a Great Critic?" **Mark Mack** wrote, "There are no real critics anymore. There are just starf*ckers or hired guns fitting in a magazine's or publisher's agenda. There are no independent thinkers. I cannot think of one good architecture critic these days." Maybe he should friend Banham.

SEND KUGEL AND FRIEND REQUESTS TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM

SHULMAN 2.0 continued from front page of the most famous mid-century modern architects, Raphael Soriano.

But since Shulman's death two years ago, the 1950 house has slid into a sad state of decline. Its paint is chipping, its carpets are dank, its concrete is cracking, and its interiors have a worn look that begs for renewal. Furthermore, the home's abundant landscaping, designed by Garret Eckbo, is starting to become an overgrown jungle that's turning on the house itself.

LA-based Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects (LOHA) has been commissioned by the home's owners, who wish to remain anonymous, to ride to the rescue. Firm principal Lorcan O'Herlihy has had some experience renovating modernist masterpieces: he also restored Richard Neutra's Staller Residence in Bel Air and Neutra's Goldhammer House in Palos Verdes. He has been working on the Shulman project since May and is set to complete the renovation by the fall. And despite the fact that the house is carefully designated, LA's Office of Historic Resources is allowing the architect to add some of his contemporary "voice," as he puts it.

"It's going to have a new life," said Lambert Giessinger, Historic Preservation Architect for LA's Office of Historic Resources. "It's not going to be a museum. We try to maintain a balance between preserving the historic fabric and responding to the needs of the owner." Giessinger says this often comes as a surprise to owners and architects, but such flexibility is common within the bounds of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, which guided the project.

The house, with its floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors, open floorplan, and lush landscaping, showcases the California lifestyle that Shulman captured over his storied career. The scenery dominates most

views, and Shulman's office is located in a separate building altogether.

But one of the elements that Soriano didn't like was Shulman's addition of screens, which essentially created outdoor rooms but didn't adhere to Soriano's idea of strict formal boundaries between inside and out. Still, for Shulman, his family, and visitors the screened areas became the dominant location for meals and socializing and proved quite successful. O'Herlihy plans to riff off these screens, adding several of his own in a lighter color that will create a contemporary take on a modernist look.

While the exterior will remain essentially the same, changes inside will include re-cladding the house's aging Douglas fir panels with lighter woods, adding some skylights to help light penetrate darker corridors, and creating completely new kitchens and bathrooms. "Adding richness where there's tiredness," as LOHA associate Donnie Schmidt put it. Shulman's old office will become a guest suite, and the firm will add a series of small new ductless heating and cooling units, which should be virtually impossible to spot.

O'Herlihy describes the renovation as a "light touch," and points to "control and improvisation" as his guiding themes. "Change is ok," he added. "Tension between old and new can be valuable." The firm is working with Soriano's original drawings, found in the Cal Poly Pomona archives, and will likely collaborate with landscape architect Mia Lehrer in the near future to return the house's terrain to its former glory.

In many ways LOHA is the perfect firm to undertake the job, since they've made a name creating splendid-looking modernist residences using inexpensive off-the-shelf materials. And they will need to use that expertise—at \$240,000, the overall budget is tight. "That's architecture," said O'Herlihy. "You have parameters." **SL**



Old (left) and new (right) screens at the Shulman house.

LOHA

OPEN> RESTAURANT



RICK POON

> MB POST

1142 Manhattan Ave.
Manhattan Beach, CA
Tel: 310-545-5405
Designer: Steven Francis Jones

Steven Francis Jones is becoming one of the restaurant kings of California. In the next six months he will launch eateries in West Covina, Rancho Cucamonga, Hollywood, Beverly Hills, and Mendocino County. But the first of the bunch is MB Post, which recently opened in Manhattan Beach. The rustic project had once been the home of the Manhattan Beach Post Office. That building's bones of old concrete walls were discovered behind more recent remodels and then exposed. Jones, who lives in Manhattan Beach, brought other pieces of the town into the space, including walls constructed of mismatched planks of reclaimed barn wood, as well as planks painted to look like volleyball posts and lifeguard stands. An old 1954 bicycle reinvented as a light fixture dresses up a wall partition, while the designer also installed mailbox slots, cubby holes, and various mail-related antiques. Large sliding steel and glass doors connect the dining room to the outside, and the ceiling was opened up, revealing trusses and creating more space. Hanging trough lights seem to float and concentrate lighting on food, not peoples' faces. "I don't know that I could do the same thing for another city that I was not so intimately part of," said Jones of the interior. **SL**



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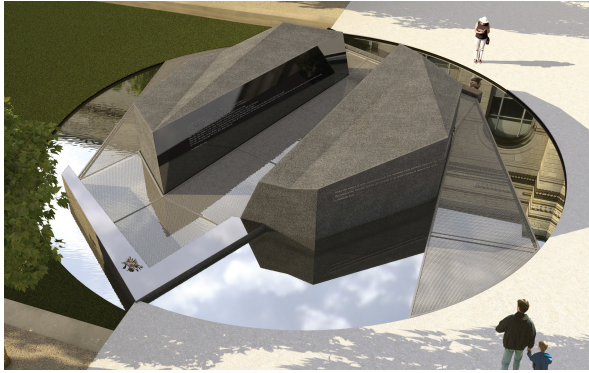
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COURTESY NARDULI STUDIO AND ANDREA COCHRAN

UNVEILED

SAN FRANCISCO VETERANS MEMORIAL

Fulfilling a vision that dates back to the 1920s, a veterans memorial commissioned by the city of San Francisco will be erected near City Hall. A sketch from the archives shows that the original concept was quite traditional (think "man on pedestal wielding sword"), but the contemporary proposal by Los Angeles architect Susan Narduli and San Francisco landscape architect Andrea Cochran, winners of a national competition, is in keeping with today's more

subdued approach to memorial design. Other finalists were Norman Lee and SWA Group; and Larry Kirkland and J. Douglas Macy.

The 2,500-square-foot, \$2 million memorial will be located in the courtyard that lies between two of San Francisco's Beaux Arts icons, the War Memorial Opera House and its twin, the Veterans Building. The space is very formal, with gilded metal gates at either end and a row of sycamores along the perimeter. At the edge of the lawn facing City Hall, concrete pavers form a large circle and octagon intended to represent heaven and earth.

Working with those

existing shapes, Narduli and Cochran's design will feature a round reflecting pool with an octagonal monument rising five feet above street level. The basalt-encased monument will be split in two, allowing visitors to walk into its center along a steel mesh walkway, suspended over the water.

"I wanted the memorial to be understood physically when you entered it," said Narduli. The long lawn will become a forecourt, gradually sloping down to a depth of 30 inches (the maximum before a guardrail is required), and the rammed-earth retaining walls will double as seating. "The slope was our way to resolve how to create something that can stick up out of the ground, but doesn't block the views," said Cochran.

LYDIA LEE

Designers: Narduli Studio and Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture
Developer/Client: City of San Francisco
Location: San Francisco
Scheduled Completion: November 2013

PARKING SMART continued from front page
land uses in the city. Sometimes, that doesn't work," summed up Tom Rothmann, the Los Angeles city planner in charge of shepherding the proposed policy through the public process.

The MPR allows modifications to the city's existing parking requirements depending on a particular neighborhood's needs. Seven optional parking requirement modifications have been introduced, including the option to decrease parking requirements in developments near transit districts or to increase parking in continually clogged areas like the beach.

Other innovations include parking maximums (instead of the current minimums), off-site parking within 1,500 feet, allowing a building to change its use without requiring its parking to adapt to current codes, and the possibility of commercial parking credit systems, where excess parking could be surveyed and rented out to smaller businesses to help fulfill their parking requirements.

With a case file that dates back to 2007, the proposed ordinance has gone through major changes. One important modification was lowering parking standards for density bonus projects, which would prevent MPR districts from undercutting affordable housing development.

The proposed ordinance has gained favor especially with those looking to build a more transit-oriented city and those working in construction and development. The creation of MPR districts relieves much of the pressure to over-provide for parking, making it easier for businesses to set up shop. In a letter to LA City Planning Commission

president William Roschen, AIA/LA Executive Director Nicci Solomons supported the move, writing, "With a city as vast and as diverse as Los Angeles, parking policy cannot be regulated in a one-size fits all approach because, unfortunately, excessive or misaligned parking requirements often impair our ability to have a vibrant, sustainable and healthy city."

MPR still has its detractors, however, primarily coming from parking-starved neighborhoods that have already seen commuters take up parking spots.

"We find this to be a dream for the growth machine and a nightmare for the neighborhoods surrounding one of these districts," said Jack Allen, president of the Palisades Preservation Association. According to Allen, parking spillage would cause residential area homeowners to fight for parking with shoppers from nearby commercial districts.

Barbara Broide, president at Westwood South of Santa Monica Boulevard Homeowners Association, agrees. She is asking for more research before proceeding. "We don't have data and facts to back this up," said Broide.

Despite their concerns, an ever-growing demand for a more transit-friendly, walkable city carried the day. Pending a signature from the mayor, the ordinance could mean less parking in exchange for more small businesses, denser development, and even green space. Speaking in favor of the ordinance, Mott Smith, principal of Civic Enterprise Associates said, "If indeed Los Angeles stays the capital of cars, we should at least be the capital of smart management of cars." **CARREN JAO**

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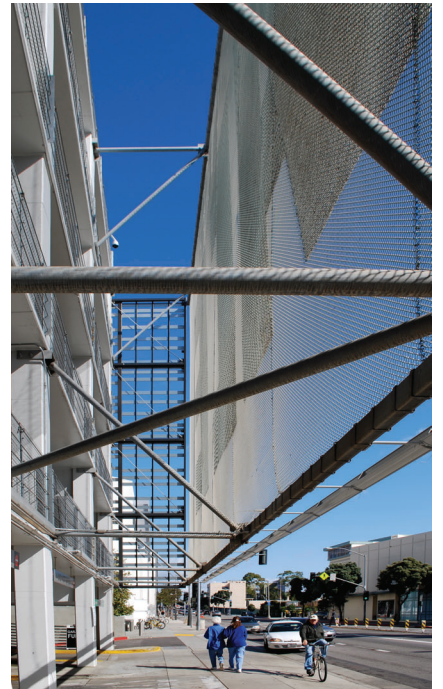
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Clockwise from top left: The garages' stairwells are clad in orange glass; Gehry's mesh screen still remains on one surface; a colorful tile mural by Anne Marie Karlsen adorns one facade (Ball-Nogues created another art piece); panels are made of colored cement board.

Two new garages by Brooks+Scarpa architects are not expensive or fancy or even architectural masterpieces. They are simply good improvements on a difficult building type. And they should be considered a model to cities building future utilitarian structures.

The garages, just outside the redesigned Santa Monica Place Mall in Downtown Santa Monica, were once covered with green steel mesh facades made by none other than Frank Gehry. But the buildings had fallen on hard times and needed an aesthetic and functional upgrade.

The firm's main design move was the placement of large steel frames on the exterior, to which they attached multi-colored and multi-textured bars of cement board. The relatively easy and cheap process provides shade and privacy, while still allowing light to filter through. It also gives the structures, which Scarpa points out can often be "neighborhood killers," a sense of rhythm, visual variety, and

vibrancy, helping them become part of the urban fabric rather than a detriment to it.

Another important move was putting retail—enlivened with fold up garage doors—on the ground floor, so as not to deaden the street level. Now there is always foot traffic in front of the garages, and their brightly colored orange glass-enclosed exterior stairs even encourage people to (gasp) walk up to their cars. Eventually the firm hopes to install bike stations at ground level as well.

If you look around any city you'll see that a popular strategy with most parking garages is to make them as simple and bare-bones as possible hoping they will blend in with blank walls. They don't. They look worse. We need better design, but it doesn't have to cost a fortune.

Of course building an architecturally-worthy garage can be a real challenge. Because they're full of cars, garages need to be made of materials that can't combust, and that generally means concrete. And

since they have no program besides parking, there is usually no incentive for clients to push for any interior distinction. But parking garages need to contribute to the urban fabric, or, as Scarpa puts it, they will hurt it.

Besides these two garages, the firm also collaborated on four others in the vicinity—although their work on these was minimal, mostly repainting, improving facades and installing new lighting and parking management systems. All the garages are fronted with public art, including an array of hanging steel orbs by Ball Nogues, a colorful tile mural by Anne Marie Karlsen, and several water-like perforated metal screens by Cliff Garten.

The work on all six garages and their public art cost \$3 million, said Scarpa. That's probably less than one floor of Herzog & de Meuron's garage in Miami.

Other new garages in LA have used equally uncomplicated means to create dynamic and useful spaces. John

Friedman Alice Kimm Architects designed a wonderful, colorful steel mesh frontage for the LA Police Headquarters Garage in downtown Los Angeles. They've also put in space for ground level retail, although the city has yet to utilize this opportunity. And Moore Ruble Yudell, also in Santa Monica, created a fascinating composition on the exterior of the Santa Monica Convention Center's parking lot using colorful channel glass. Unfortunately, that project does not have ground level retail, but it's already become an icon for the city.

"Garages are finally considered part of the urban fabric," said Scarpa, who noted that he wasn't concerned with making the structures precious, just effective. And his model, he noted, can be "fabricated at a reasonable schedule," meaning it can easily be replicated.

As Brooks+Scarpa demonstrate, the simplest solutions are often the best.

SL



JOHN EDWARD LINDEN

CATCH 27 continued from front page state to close its budget shortfall.

According to CRA/LA, which is by far the largest redevelopment agency in the state, the bills would necessitate a payment by the city of LA of roughly \$70 million by this January and an estimated \$38 million in future years in order to preserve that agency. San Francisco's payment would measure between \$24 and \$27 million, that city's agency said. Riverside's \$19.6 million payment would be more than 40 percent of its redevelopment revenue according to Emilio Ramirez, Director of Development for the city.

"This is extortion sponsored by the legislature," said CRA/LA spokesperson David Bloom, who said that the CRA/LA is now waiting for the city of LA to decide whether to keep the agency running. He hopes the vote will come before city council recesses in August, and said he feels good that the city will "continue with their strong support for a robust redevelopment presence in the city."

Bloom stressed that the redevelopment bills are a violation of Prop 22, a ballot measure passed last year that prevents the state from raiding local redevelopment funds. The California Redevelopment Association and the League of California Cities on July 18 filed a lawsuit in the California Supreme Court challenging the measure's constitutionality.

Several cities, predicted Redevelopment Association Executive Director John Shirey, will not be able to pay their share of the \$1.7 billion, and their redevelopment agencies will "die." Gabriel Metcalf, Executive Director of San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR), heard that nine of the ten

largest redevelopment agencies would be spared by their cities, with the exception of San Jose.

CRA/LA was able to get approval for what Bloom considers almost a year's-worth of projects before the passage of the measures. But as CRA/LA waits for a decision on its future, about 20 of its upcoming projects—like improvements to the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center in Mid-City, the Downtown Streetcar, and affordable housing projects throughout the city—are now on hold.

San Francisco CRA director Fred Blackwell said in a videotaped statement that the city could lose "hundreds of affordable housing projects that are in the pipeline": facade improvements along Sixth Street, South of Market, and Third Street in Bayview; Mid-Market Redevelopment projects; and the revitalization of the Schlage Locks site in Visitacion Valley.

SPUR's Metcalf, while supportive of redevelopment, wants more CRA reform than generic "accountability and transparency" promises. "It's a very expensive program with some incredible success stories but with a huge number of unsuccessful stories," he said. He suggested changes to redevelopment law that would make it easier to enact, more fairly distributed, and less prone to "overuse."

Still Metcalf supports keeping redevelopment, largely because of its ability to redirect growth in struggling areas and because of its prevention of sprawling development. "I think the governor's solution is going to cause many more problems for the state than it solves. But I think something needed to happen," he said. **SL**

SADDLE-SHAPED DESIGN WINS PLAZA COMPETITION



COURTESY ALL THAT IS SOLID

Silver Lake Riding High

The search for a new neighborhood symbol in Silver Lake is over. In July, Silver Lake residents selected "Bloomrs" by LA firm All That Is Solid as the winner of the Envisioning Silver Lake competition. The contest, organized by LA City Council President Eric Garcetti, the Silver Lake Neighborhood Council, and Silver Lake community groups, called for designs for a plaza and permanent installation at the corner of Sunset and Santa Monica boulevards.

The design for "Bloomrs" calls for a saddle-shaped lattice structure made of Cor-ten that doubles the

possible green space of the triangular median where Sunset meets Santa Monica. The two upturned ends serve as shade canopies, while the lowest point of the hyperboloid can become a community patio. Bike racks also hide underneath one of the upturned ends.

"We wanted to avoid inserting another billboard into the landscape. We realized that a community-populated lush green site in such a prominent location is in itself the best possible advertisement for the pedestrian and bicycle-friendly lifestyle that Silver Lake embodies," said Danielle

Wagner, one of four partners at All That Is Solid. The firm's members all earned their Masters in Architecture at UCLA, where they formed their partnership.

The competition received 59 entries in all. A jury of locals and designers trimmed those down to their top five, which were presented in a community meeting. The designers were each given five minutes to present their concepts, after which community members were asked to rank every design. Other finalists included Bau 10, Meter, BplusU, and Patrick Tighe Architecture.

With the winner announced, the next step is to actually build. Given a \$100,000 budget (from the \$1.5 million set aside from the state's Metro Call for Projects program), the winning firm, engineers, and LA Street Services will need to work out how the design will be executed, said Ryan Carpio of Garcetti's office. As of press time, the parties have yet to meet and discuss feasibility and implementation, but Carpio said that the city will likely break ground this winter or early spring of 2012. **cj**

Building Relationships.



Horizon at Playa Vista Owner: Lincoln Property Company Design Architect: Johnson Fain
Executive Architect + Interiors Architect: HKS Architects, Inc.

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An advertisement for Averyboardman. The background is a close-up photograph of a white, tufted sofa. A black beaded necklace is draped over one of the tufts. The text "A|B" is prominently displayed in large, light blue letters. Below it, the text "THE HIGHEST EXPRESSION OF CUSTOM UPHOLSTERY®" is written in smaller, white capital letters. The website "averyboardman.com" is written in large, bold, light blue letters. At the bottom, a line of text reads "visit our website averyboardman.com to explore infinite solutions for the hospitality industry".

HOUSE OF THE ISSUE > PROTO HOMES



Since the days of the Case Study Houses and well before, architects have been trying to solve the formula for making elegant, modern homes affordable. Many of today's top architects have tried, but the results, while definitely attractive and livable, are rarely at the regular Joe's income level.

One of the latest to try is a company called Proto Homes, established in 2007 and led by Frank Vafae, a veteran of the luxury homebuilding industry.

"You can always sell palaces in Brentwood," noted Vafae, who said he saw a hole in the market for new modern

homes and decided to pounce. "Developers like to say Modernism is the kiss of death," said Vafae, but he clearly didn't believe them.

While architects espouse their custom designs and signature touches, the construction-savvy Vafae realized that these elements were the enemies of low cost. Proto Homes uses standardization and factory-built pre-fabricated elements combined with interior flexibility to keep costs down but maintain a lofty and modern feel. The company, whose partners include two architects and an engineer, also designs and builds its projects, keep-

ing costs, and uncertainty, down.

Sizes range from 800 to 4,000 square feet, and prices cost about \$210 per square foot.

The company recently completed its first home in Baldwin Village, a nice but certainly not Brentwood-like area of LA. The home uses a hybrid construction method combining prefabricated steel roof and wall panels with a timber strand frame that can go up in one week. The exterior materials and sizes are pre-determined, but buyers can choose from selected variations of corrugated steel and PVC panel. "Things can change, but we

need to keep the bones the same," explained Vafae.

The envelope is highly efficient, with thick walls insulated with foam or fiberglass and double pane glass and a high-efficiency furnace. The roof tilts up dramatically, helping with drainage and opening the interior up to light and space. Because all mechanical systems are located in a central core (all can be controlled on an iPad), the roof is clear of bulk and can allow more light penetration.

Inside, the interior is lofty, with a second floor mezzanine and open-plan living spaces that can be divided up into a variety of configurations. Everything is flexible, with a series of modules arranged around the central core (which the company calls the "Proto Core"). Accordion doors close off bedrooms, and sliding doors move along walls. The kitchen uses modular cabinets whose finishes can also be switched out.

Vafae complains that Modernism has been relegated to "trophy" residences and that he wants to bring it back to its roots of inexpensive materials and true innovation, "not gimmickry." In addition to Proto Homes, a handful of other companies, like Blu Homes, Piece Homes, and Ma Modular are all trying to crack this slowly emerging market, but none have yet captured the popular imagination (and others have gone out of business). Perhaps Vafae's model, which tries to combine prefab techniques with custom comfort, has found a formula for success. **SL**



LISA ROMERIN

STATE OF THE UNION continued from front page architects, engineers and planners from firms like Gensler, Grimshaw, Foster and Partners, Perkins + Will, ZGF, Johnson Fain, Rios Clementi Hale, Daly Genik, Buro Happold, Arup, Barton Myers, and others.

The agency shared plans to develop up to six million square feet on the site, which contains three subway lines, Amtrak, and Metrolink stations and bus lines. The station should also see Metro's Regional Connector and California High Speed Rail.

Specific requests for transit-oriented development and a mix of uses, including commercial, retail, entertainment, housing, and a new high-speed rail terminal, will be dictated to some extent by the existing Alameda District Specific Plan. The agency's goals, according to a document it posted on its site, include accommodating transit needs, creating "an iconic place of extraordinary design," improving connectivity to the city, and maximizing the value of Metro's investment.

The agency issued a Request for Information and Qualifications (RFIQ) for a site planner on July 22, and will select a short list by October 27. It will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) on October 31, and select a winner by March or April 2012.

Planning teams, pointed out Martha Welborne, Executive Director of Countywide Planning at Metro, should be multi-disciplinary, including architects, planners, and engineers. In addition to the typical nuts-and-bolts, the RFP asks for an assessment of the area's commercial viability, for ideas to connect Union Station to its surroundings, and for a plan for public engagement.

Metro is also requiring short listed teams to produce a "Vision Plan" for the area, which will be an "unconstrained" vision of Union

Station consisting of visual perspectives and site plans that will be presented publicly. The goal, said Calvin Hollis, Executive Officer of Countywide Planning & Development at Metro, is to "create some excitement about the property."

The Vision Plans will hold no weight in the selection of a winning team. Welborne didn't yet know if a stipend would be made available for such work.

"We don't have the time to do a full-blown design competition," said Welborne, who acknowledged that limiting expectations about the plans would be tricky.

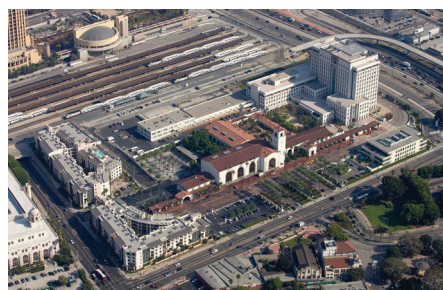
Not every planner and architect in the room liked the vision plan proposal.

"It's disingenuous to the firms to say you're going to do all this work and present it to the public, but nothing will come of it," said one architect.

Roland Genick, Chief Architect for Rail and Transit Systems at Parsons, countered, "I like the idea of showing a pathway to the development rather than a detailed architectural proposal."

Once a master planner is chosen, Metro plans to lease parcels on the site to developers. A final master plan for the project is planned for August 2013. **SL**

Aerial view of the Union Station property.



COURTESY METRO



JFAK

Early conceptualization of the La Kretz Innovation Campus.

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT continued from front page the Los Angeles State Historic Park to Santa Fe Avenue and 15th Street.

CRA/LA has two anchor projects in the area: the Cleantech Manufacturing Center, where CRA/LA hopes to house green manufacturing and technology companies, and the La Kretz Innovation Campus which will include offices for several clean technology-related companies. The former is on the skids, while the latter may finally be getting some traction.

For the third time in less than three years, the deal to sell the CRA/LA-owned 20-acre land positioned as a Cleantech Manufacturing Center has fallen through. Talks with local real estate development and investment company Genton Property Group were recently terminated by Genton due to concerns that the land was too contaminated. The property has again been put up for bid and CRA/LA spokesperson David Bloom said the agency continues to be in conversation with Genton, Trammell Crow, and a handful of other qualified bidders.

Despite that setback, the city is still moving forward with the three-acre La Kretz Innovation Campus in partnership with the Department of Water and Power (DWP). The contract to design and engineer the development was signed before the governor

approved legislation to potentially dissolve the state's CRA's, thus binding CRA/LA and DWP to fulfill its obligations.

LA-based architecture firm John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects (JFAK) have been awarded the contract to master plan the property, located at the corner of Hewitt and Fifth streets in Downtown. No designs for the project have been finalized, but it will occupy portions of an existing one-floor masonry building. Alice Kimm, principal at JFAK, says the firm hopes to break ground in about a year and begin construction a year after that. A 3,300-square-foot temporary space just down the street from the planned site is already up and running.

The planned La Kretz Innovation Campus will mostly be occupied by Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI), a non-profit launched by CRA/LA and the DWP to help green businesses get their start. It will include 27,500 square feet of administrative spaces, office areas, and conference rooms for 20 to 25 companies, shared Kimm. The LADWP Demand Response Demonstration Laboratory (DRDL) will occupy about 10,000-square feet, and will include workspaces and demonstration areas for clean technology products and electric vehicle prototypes. The rest of the facility will be leased to Cleantech companies or used by LADWP.

The site also includes plans for a \$2.5 million half-acre Arts District Park on the corner of Hewitt and Fifth streets. The park, still being developed, would have a grassy area, gathering spaces, shading, a water plaza, children's play areas and possibly an urban farm component. **CJ**

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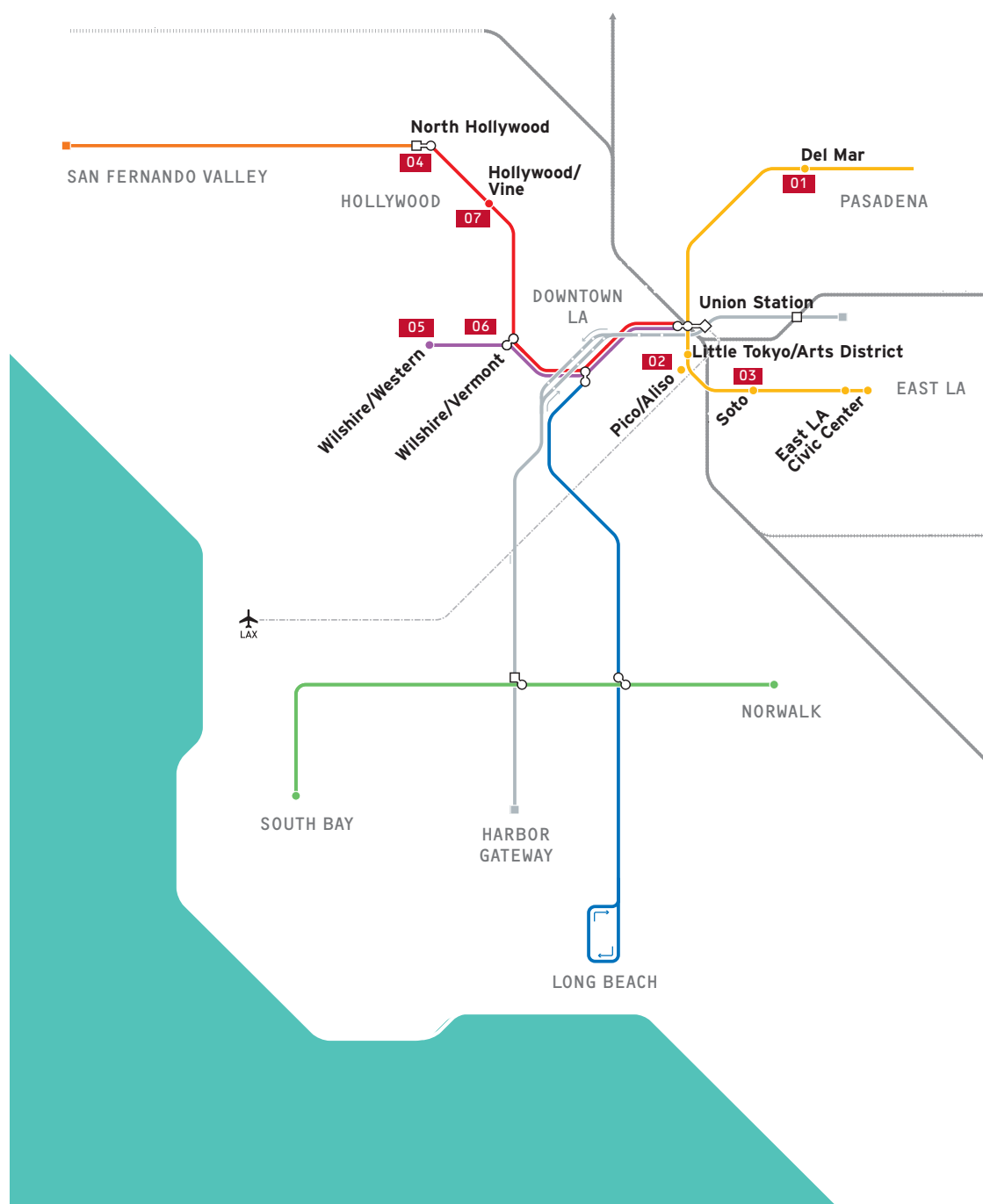
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HOME ON THE RAILS

FROM METRO TO BART, CALIFORNIA
AGENCIES ARE ACTIVELY COLLABORATING
WITH DEVELOPERS. SAM LUBELL
INVESTIGATES TRANSIT-ORIENTED DESIGN.

Yes, we admit it: the car is still king in California. But from LA to San Francisco an impressive list of new transit projects are beginning to change this. LA, known as the archetypal freeway city, has built or is planning more than ten new rail lines and extensions—largely spurred by 2008 ballot measure R, a sales tax hike providing billions to transit projects. In the Bay Area, recently-completed initiatives like San Francisco's Third Street Light Rail and the San Francisco Airport extension, as well as future extensions into Silicon Valley and the East Bay, are helping connect a sprawling collection of cities. Meanwhile, California has become a test ground for High Speed Rail, with the stage set for lines running the entire length of the state in coming years.

Thanks to changes in both attitude and development patterns, the growth in transit is bringing with it a lengthy list of Transit Oriented Developments (TODs), projects catering to a combination of mass transit, denser neighborhoods, and mixed-use and pedestrian scale development. And the leaders in TOD are none other than local transit agencies themselves, taking matters into their own hands by making huge investments, often in coordination with the field's other players: developers, non-profits, and redevelopment agencies. In addition to several transit authorities along the path of California's high speed rail, the leading agencies are LA County Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART). "The public sector creates infrastructure, the private sector creates development. That creates harmony," sums up Ronald Altoon, a partner at architecture firm Altoon + Porter and incoming Executive Director at the Urban Land Institute's LA Chapter.

TOD projects have proven successful in increasing ridership for Metro and BART, containing sprawl, and earning millions of dollars in income for the agencies. Some have won awards for architecture and urban design. But of course, as with any public endeavor, they've got their issues. Many complain that their uses are too limited and that their connections to their communities are weak. Others complain that the focus is on the wrong D-word: Development, not Design. As developers, not architects, become TOD point people, originality and innovation often takes a back seat to the profit and practical concerns of developers and bureaucrats. Given this, combined with the high cost of TOD development and the lower incomes in many transit-oriented districts, it's impressive when thoughtful designs emerge.

AGENCIES ON BOARD

Metro's Joint Development TOD program, founded about five years ago, has completed eight projects and is working on close to 30 more. Most are mixed-use projects dominated by multi-family residential buildings either near transit or containing their own transit stations (about a quarter of the units are affordable). Roger Moliere, Metro's Chief of Real Property and Economic Development, calls Metro's TOD program the biggest of any transit agency in the country. In the first five years of its existence it has brought in about \$14 to \$15 million a year for the agency, said Moliere.

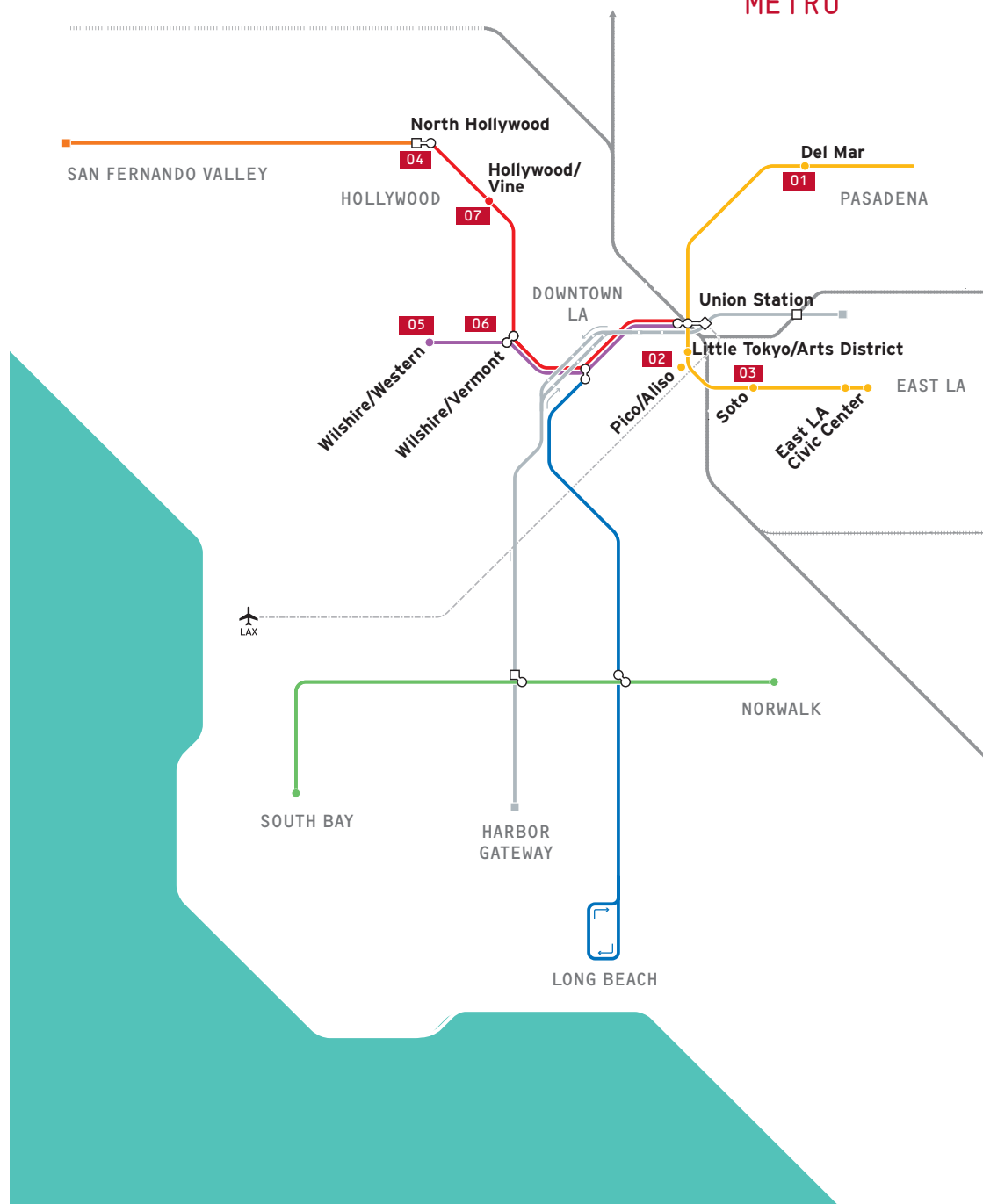
"People want to live in cities," said Moliere, who insists that the best way to add density in cities is with mixed-use development near transit. "I would not want to be a single family homebuilder right now."

Perhaps the most recognized of the completed projects is Hollywood and Vine, a mixed-use complex that contains the W Hotel as well as condos by HKS architects with elements by Daly Genik and Sussman Prejza and a glassy subway entrance by Rios Clementi Hale. Another is Wilshire/Vermont, by Arquitectonica, a mixed-use building lined with retail on its ground floor with a giant mural by artist April Greiman. Other stand-outs include Michael Maltzan's One Santa Fe, a sinuous project near SCI-Arc and the Metro Red Line that will include over 400 apartments and over 750,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space, as well as Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists' Del Mar station on the Gold Line, a New Urbanist-style mixed-use compilation of buildings around a central plaza.

The projects are generally located on land that Metro already owns, often adjacent to existing right of ways or on Metro surface parking lots, which are being converted into parking structures. Projects generally wait until rail lines are completed to begin, and Metro prefers leasing land to selling it, so it can collaborate closely on the types of buildings planned, maintain the character of development over the long haul, and ensure a steady stream of funds.

BART, meanwhile, is involved with 18 TOD projects at its stations, representing over \$2.7 billion in private investment. Five have been completed and 13 are either approved or in negotiation. The agency adopted its TOD policy in 2005, hoping to increase ridership and make money. Other benefits, according to BART, include connecting with communities, creating tax revenues for cities, and increasing mixed-use and infill development instead of single use sprawl.

According to Jeff Ordway, Manager of Real Estate and

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01

**DEL MAR TRANSIT VILLAGE**

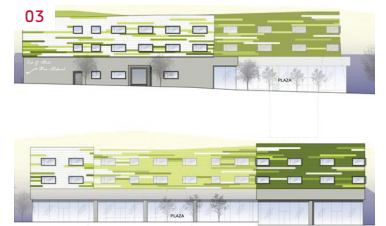
ARCHITECT: MOULE & POLYZOIDES
DEVELOPER: URBAN PARTNERS
LINE: METRO GOLD LINE
SIZE: 347 APARTMENTS, 11,000 SQUARE FEET RETAIL
COMPLETION: 2007

02

**ONE SANTA FE**

ARCHITECT: MICHAEL MALTZAN ARCHITECTS
DEVELOPER: MCGREGOR COMPANY
LINE: METRO RED LINE, GOLD LINE
SIZE: 438 APARTMENTS, 77,000 SQUARE FEET RETAIL AND LIVE/WORK
COMPLETION: TBD

03

**1ST + SOTO**

ARCHITECT: GONZALEZ GOODALE
DEVELOPER: A COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS
LINE: METRO GOLD LINE
SIZE: 41-50 APARTMENTS, 14,500 SQUARE FEET RETAIL, 11,500 SQUARE FEET OFFICE, PRESCHOOL FACILITY, COMMUNITY SPACE
COMPLETION: TBD

04

**NOHO ART WAVE**

ARCHITECT: A.C. MARTIN
DEVELOPER: LOWE ENTERPRISES
LINE: METRO RED & ORANGE LINES
SIZE: 15.5 ACRES, 1.7 MILLION SQUARE FEET
COMPLETION: TBD

05

**WILSHIRE/WESTERN**

ARCHITECT: ARCHEON GROUP
DEVELOPER: KOAR WILSHIRE WESTERN, LLC
LINE: METRO PURPLE LINE
SIZE: 195 CONDOMINIUMS, 49,500 SQUARE FEET RETAIL
COMPLETION: 2009

06

**WILSHIRE/VERMONT- APARTMENTS**

ARCHITECT: ARQUITECTONICA
DEVELOPER: URBAN PARTNERS, MACFARLANE PARTNERS
LINE: METRO RED AND PURPLE LINES
SIZE: 449 APARTMENTS, 35,000 SQUARE FEET RETAIL
COMPLETION: 2007

GARY LEONARD

Property Development at BART, TOD's were part of the agency's original mandate in the 1960s, but that idea fell apart when land use patterns couldn't keep up. Starting with a modest project in Castro Valley in the late '90s, the agency finally got its program underway.

As opposed to Metro's joint development, BART has no pre-determined model. "Each community is unique," said Ordway, who points to projects that are direct leases to developers, direct sales, land swaps with jurisdictions, and joint-powers authorities for land that is split between the county and the agency. One of the more complicated land deals came about when BART and the city of Berkeley swapped air and land rights to clear the way for Leddy Maytum Stacy's

Ed Roberts Campus, a dynamic facility for non-profits that includes spiraling internal ramps, large skylights, and a memorable glass facade. Ed Roberts got the ground, BART got the air (and subsequent station and parking areas) and the development was on its way.

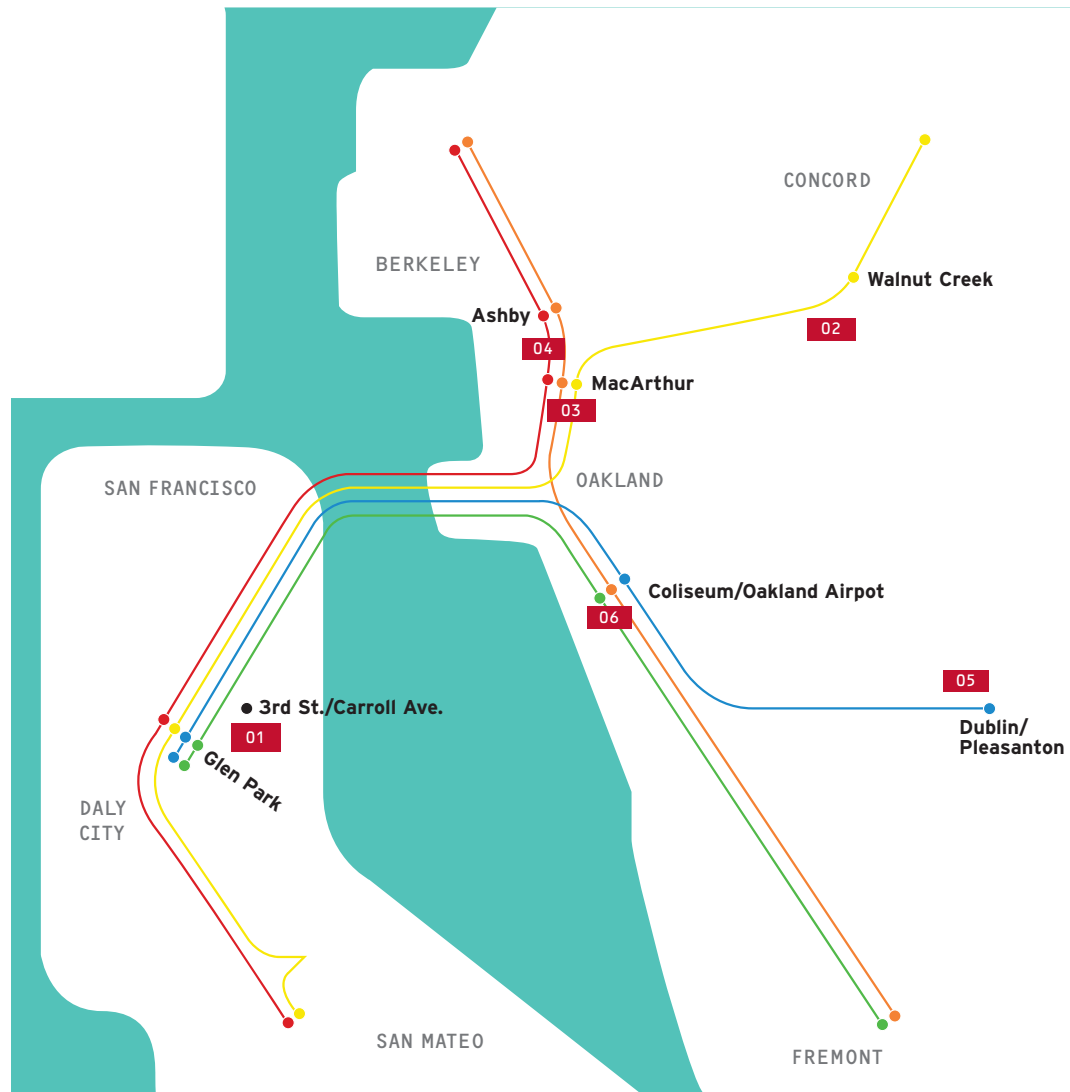
Ordway also notes that the agency tries to promote transit "villages," such as the MacArthur Transit Village, a mixed-use collection of buildings located at the MacArthur stop of the Pittsburgh/Bay Point line. "We're trying to create something that's sustainable, not just a building," he said, noting that the agency will try to phase in projects with local cities and landowners, which can be a financing and zoning headache. But to Ordway, "It's a superior product."

07

**HOLLYWOOD AND VINE**

ARCHITECT: HKS
DEVELOPER: LEGACY PARTNERS
LINE: METRO RED LINE
SIZE: 300 HOTEL ROOMS, 143 CONDOS, 375 APARTMENTS
COMPLETION: 2009

IMAGES COURTESY METRO UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



ED ROBERTS CAMPUS
ARCHITECT: LEDDY MAYTUM STACY
DEVELOPER: ERC PARTNERS
LINE: RICHMOND LINE
SIZE: 149,000 SQUARE FEET
COMPLETION: 2011

TIM GRIFFITH



ARMSTRONG PLACE
ARCHITECT: DAVID BAKER
DEVELOPER: BRIDGE HOUSING
LINE: MUNI THIRD STREET LIGHT RAIL
SIZE: 130,000 SQUARE FEET RENTAL APARTMENTS;
238,000 SQUARE FEET TOWNHOUSES
COMPLETION: 2011

BRIAN ROSE



WALNUT CREEK
ARCHITECT: MVE & PARTNERS
DEVELOPER: TRANSIT VILLAGE ASSOCIATES (BRE PROPERTIES)
LINE: BART PITTSBURG/BAY POINT
SIZE: 600 RENTAL UNITS, 18,500 SQUARE FEET RETAIL, 3,500 SQUARE FEET TRANSIT AND BART POLICE OFFICE
COMPLETION: 2016



MACARTHUR TRANSIT VILLAGE
ARCHITECT: MVE & PARTNERS AND VAN METER WILLIAMS POLLACK
DEVELOPER: BRIDGE HOUSING
LINE: BART PITTSBURG/BAY POINT
SIZE: 524 FOR-SALE UNITS; 100 RENTAL UNITS; 42,500 SQUARE FEET RETAIL; 5,000 SQUARE FEET CHILDCARE
COMPLETION: 2015

PROS AND CONS

While there's no arguing with agencies' success at creating new TODs and their subsequent spikes in ridership and profits, some questions have arisen, like how these developments fit into their communities and whether their designs are up to par.

"TODs are not focusing enough on putting employment directly on top of transit stations," said Egon Terplan, Regional Planning Director for San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR), who argues that the focus on residential and retail should spread to office buildings and other employment centers. A good example, he notes, is San Francisco's Transbay Terminal's 1200 foot office tower. "You want offices because that's where transit riders are going to," he said.

"Where are the real jobs? Not just the retail jobs but the jobs that can employ the people that live in the area?" agreed Will Wright, AIA/LA Director of Government and Public Affairs. AIA/LA is trying to promote passage of the Community Plan Implementation Overview (CPIO), a local ordinance that would force new developments like TODs to "start to thinking about their integration into the community" by coordinating more closely with city planning. Wright is critical of Metro's existing TODs, noting "almost every one has been compromised extensively because Metro

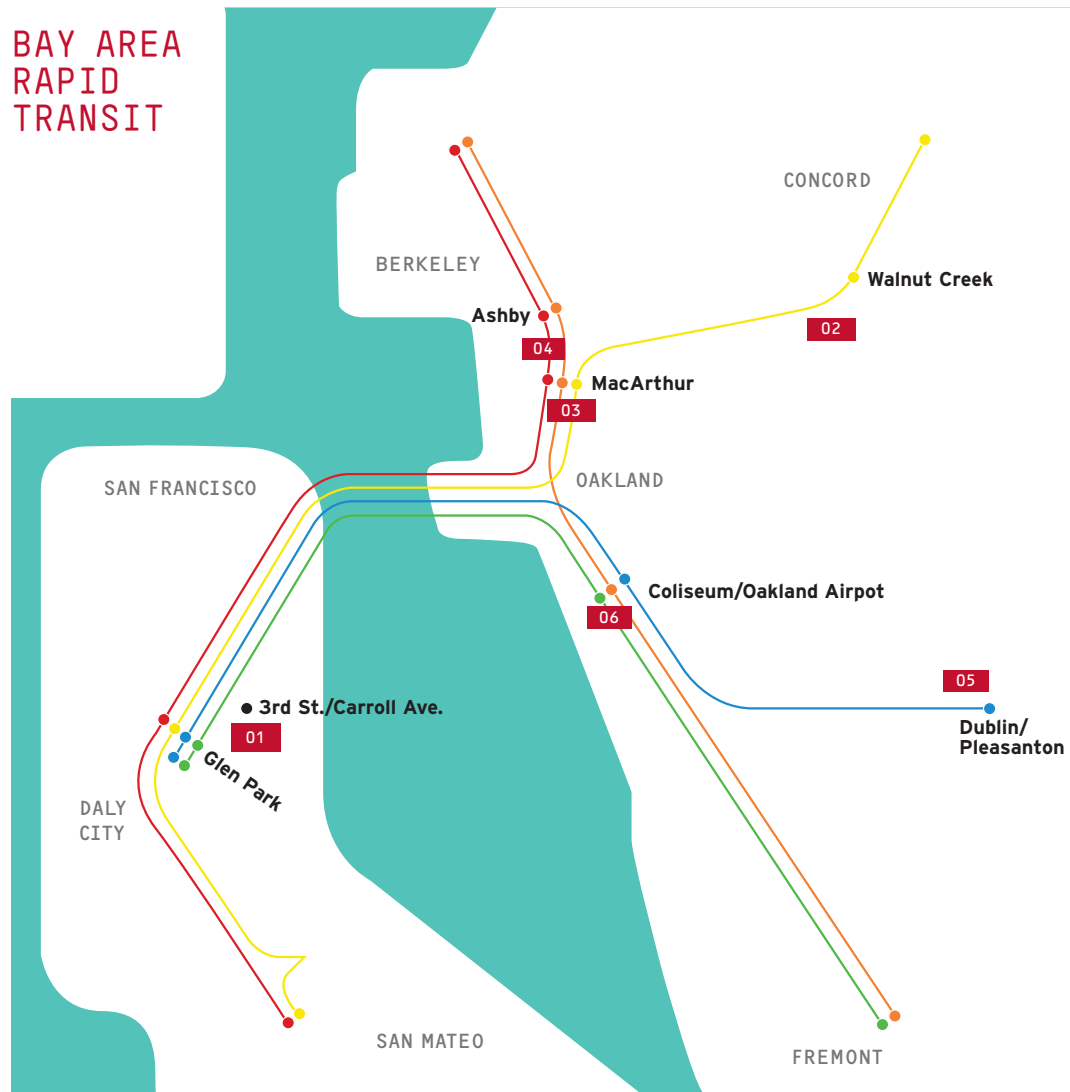
wasn't looking at the bigger picture." He points to Wilshire/Vermont and Wilshire/Beverly on the Red Line, both with gas stations on opposite corners, which he notes are not exactly pedestrian or mass transit friendly establishments.

Meanwhile unlike the fairly consistent praise thrown at high-profile, mega-budget high speed rail hubs, local TODs' architectural quality, according to some, is improving but still not where it needs to be. ULI's Altoon, who praised Metro's Moliere for turning around that agency's TOD efforts, says that TODs have taken huge steps from their early days when designs were very "utilitarian." But he added that design still suffers, often as a result of the high cost of developing TODs, due to many infrastructure-related burdens, lower income neighborhoods, and density. He recommends more interaction with the community for feedback as well as new financing methods to provide more design funding, like lowering rents, increasing entitlements, providing more tax incentives, or setting up business improvement districts.

Metro has shown an ability to add more uses than residential and retail with upcoming projects like A.C. Martin's NOHO Art Wave in North Hollywood, which combines a city's worth of uses (the project is still up in the air, however), and Mariachi Plaza in East LA, which

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER AUGUST 17, 2011

BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT



ARMSTRONG PLACE

ARCHITECT: DAVID BAKER
DEVELOPER: BRIDGE HOUSING
LINE: MUNI THIRD STREET LIGHT RAIL
SIZE: 130,000 SQUARE FEET RENTAL APARTMENTS;
238,000 SQUARE FEET TOWNHOUSES
COMPLETION: 2011



WALNUT CREEK

ARCHITECT: MVE & PARTNERS
DEVELOPER: TRANSIT VILLAGE
ASSOCIATES (BRE PROPERTIES)
LINE: BART PITTSBURG/
BAY POINT
SIZE: 600 RENTAL UNITS,
18,500 SQUARE FEET RETAIL,
3,500 SQUARE FEET TRANSIT
AND BART POLICE OFFICE
COMPLETION: 2016

MACARTHUR TRANSIT VILLAGE

ARCHITECT: MVE & PARTNERS AND
VAN METER WILLIAMS POLLACK
DEVELOPER: BRIDGE HOUSING
LINE: BART PITTSBURGH/
BAY POINT
SIZE: 524 FOR-SALE UNITS;
100 RENTAL UNITS;
42,500 SQUARE FEET RETAIL;
5,000 SQUARE FEET CHILDCARE
COMPLETION: 2015



ED ROBERTS CAMPUS

ARCHITECT: LEDDY MAYTUM STACY
DEVELOPER: ERC PARTNERS
LINE: RICHMOND LINE
SIZE: 149,000 SQUARE FEET
COMPLETION: 2011

PROS AND CONS

While there's no arguing with agencies' success at creating new TODs and their subsequent spikes in ridership and profits, some questions have arisen, like how these developments fit into their communities and whether their designs are up to par.

"TODs are not focusing enough on putting employment directly on top of transit stations," said Egon Terplan, Regional Planning Director for San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR), who argues that the focus on residential and retail should spread to office buildings and other employment centers. A good example, he notes, is San Francisco's Transbay Terminal's 1,200 foot office tower. "You want offices because that's where transit riders are going to," he said.

"Where are the real jobs? Not just the retail jobs but the jobs that can employ the people that live in the area?" agreed Will Wright, AIA/LA Director of Government and Public Affairs. AIA/LA is trying to promote passage of the Community Plan Implementation Overview (CPIO), a local ordinance that would force new developments like TODs to "start to thinking about their integration into the community" by coordinating more closely with city planning. Wright is critical of Metro's existing TODs, noting "almost every one has been compromised extensively because Metro

wasn't looking at the bigger picture." He points to Wilshire/Vermont and Wilshire/Beverly on the Red Line, both with gas stations on opposite corners, which he notes are not exactly pedestrian or mass transit friendly establishments.

Meanwhile unlike the fairly consistent praise thrown at high-profile, mega-budget high speed rail hubs, local TODs' architectural quality, according to some, is improving but still not where it needs to be. ULI's Altoon, who praised Metro's Moliere for turning around that agency's TOD efforts, says that TODs have taken huge steps from their early days when designs were very "utilitarian." But he added that design still suffers, often as a result of the high cost of developing TODs, due to many infrastructure-related burdens, lower income neighborhoods, and density. He recommends more interaction with the community for feedback as well as new financing methods to provide more design funding, like lowering rents, increasing entitlements, providing more tax incentives, or setting up business improvement districts.

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05



IMAGES COURTESY BART UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

DUBLIN PLEASANTON

ARCHITECT: MVE& PARTNERS

DEVELOPER: WINDSTAR COMMUNITIES

LINE: DUBLIN/PLEASANTON

SIZE: 659 RENTAL UNITS; 22,500 SQUARE FEET RETAIL AND HOTEL

COMPLETION: 2016

06

**COLISEUM**

ARCHITECT: MVE& PARTNERS

DEVELOPER: OAKLAND ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT CORP

LINE: FREMONT

SIZE: 800 RENTAL UNITS, 5,000

SQUARE FEET RETAIL, 1 MILLION

SQUARE FEET COMMERCIAL

COMPLETION: 2016

is anticipated to include not only apartments and retail but also community and office space.

Meanwhile the agency has design standards for each of its projects, said Moliere, and chooses architects through an RFQ/RFP process and a panel of four or five experts, one of those being an architect/planner. The results "are not cookie cutter by any means. We make sure they work in the context of the neighborhood," said Moliere.

But is design dominant? When asked for the names of the architects on their TOD projects the agency replied, "Architects are a subcontractor to the developer and we do not have that information." One would hope these names would be at Metro's fingertips if they had control over their developers' designs.

After the ULI's recent TOD summit in Hollywood, LA community activist Stephen Box complained that TODs, often built at a formidable scale, ignore the human experience. "The unique and personal perspective of the individual must never be lost in the awesomeness and hugeness of TOD. Unfortunately, losing that human touch is the norm, not the exception."

When asked where design fell in the mix at BART, Ordway admitted it wasn't the top priority on the list. "We look at capability, experience, concept. An understanding of what the local jurisdiction is doing." But he said that both design and

practicalities have to be right.

"It's got to work physically. It has to relate to the street. It has to relate to the transit function. But it also has to work financially, so it's a mixture." Sometimes, like in Pleasant Hill, BART invited the community in for a charrette.

Many of BART's TODs are being designed by the same firm, McLaren Vasquez Emsiek & Partners, which belies a lack of architectural variety. And some in the Bay Area have criticized the agency's TODs for not being on the cutting edge design-wise. Still the agency has pulled off some triumphs, like Leddy Maytum Stacy's Ed Roberts Campus, and has created some livable new places, especially with its transit villages. Metro's ability (with their developers) to draw top architectural talent like Maltzan, Arquitectonica, A.C. Martin and others has been a good step on their path from "utilitarian" structures to top notch architecture and urbanism.

Bill Leddy, a principal at Leddy Maytum Stacy, admitted to the challenges of working with BART, from meeting the agency's many bureaucratic criteria to "making sure the right people were at the table." The process took ten years. But in the end it was "made manageable by the key folks, like Ordway, who wanted to see this project succeed."

SAM LUBELL IS AN'S WEST COAST EDITOR.



COURTESY TRANSBAY JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

TRANSBAY CENTER

ARCHITECT: PELLI CLARKE PELLI

DEVELOPER: HINES WITH TRANSBAY JOINT POWERS

AUTHORITY

SIZE: ONE MILLION SQUARE FOOT TRANSPORTATION HUB,

5.4 ACRE ROOFTOP PARK, 1,200 FOOT OFFICE TOWER

COMPLETION: 2017

**HIGH SPEED RAIL
JOINS THE PARTY**

The newest player in the TOD game is high speed rail. Because it's still early, the only developments that have been fleshed out are a few hub stations, produced through

public private partnerships—the ARTIC (Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center) Station in Anaheim and the Transbay Center in San Francisco.

Transbay, led by a team that includes Pelli Clarke Pelli

and developer Hines along with the Transbay Joint Powers Authority—a collaboration of several Bay Area government and transportation agencies—is a multi modal hub that will include facilities for Cal Train, high speed rail, bus ramps, and a major office building. The station itself includes an undulating glass facade, a glassy atrium full of public art, and a 5.4-acre working park on the roof.

Artic, produced by HOK, the city of Anaheim, and the Orange County Transportation Authority, consists of a multi-modal link of high speed rail, commuter lines, Amtrak, and local and regional bus lines. The new station's vaulted steel design will be inset with a pillow-like ETFE membrane. A lofty, wide open hall—with a ceiling measuring over 150 feet high—will be surrounded by shops and ticket booths and bordered on its southern end by train platforms and tracks.

The areas around both developments are zoned for Transit Oriented Development. For instance Artic will contain retail space inside and out while the zoning around it calls for commercial, residential office, and institutional uses. Meanwhile the Transbay Redevelopment Plan will facilitate the development of nearly 2,600 residential units, 3 million square feet of new office and commercial space, and 100,000 square feet of retail.



COURTESY HOK

ARTIC

ARCHITECT: HOK

DEVELOPER: CITY OF ANAHEIM AND ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

SIZE: 66,000-SQUARE-FOOT STATION; 16 ACRES OF MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

COMPLETION: TBD

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hardware

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www.archpaper.com



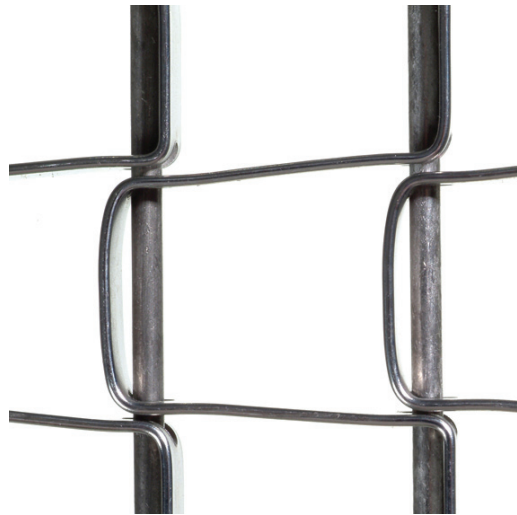
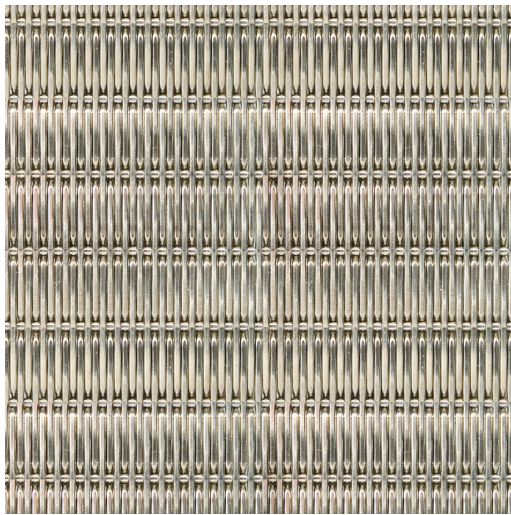
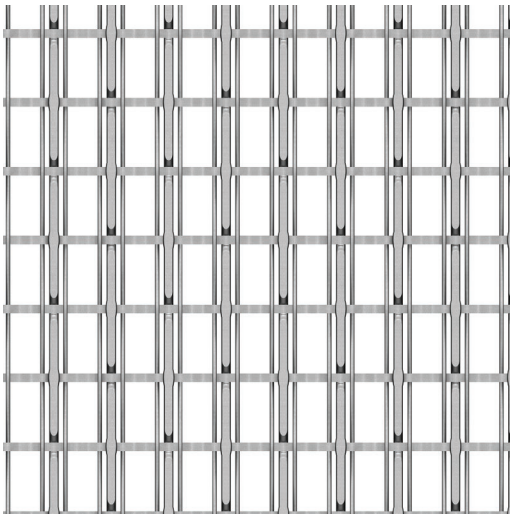
RAILS+DETAILS: Stairs with integrated lighting and bike rails and more
BATH FITTINGS: Drains that don't grate and speakers for the shower
HANDLES+PULLS: Noteworthy upgrades for doors and cabinets

GET A GRIP

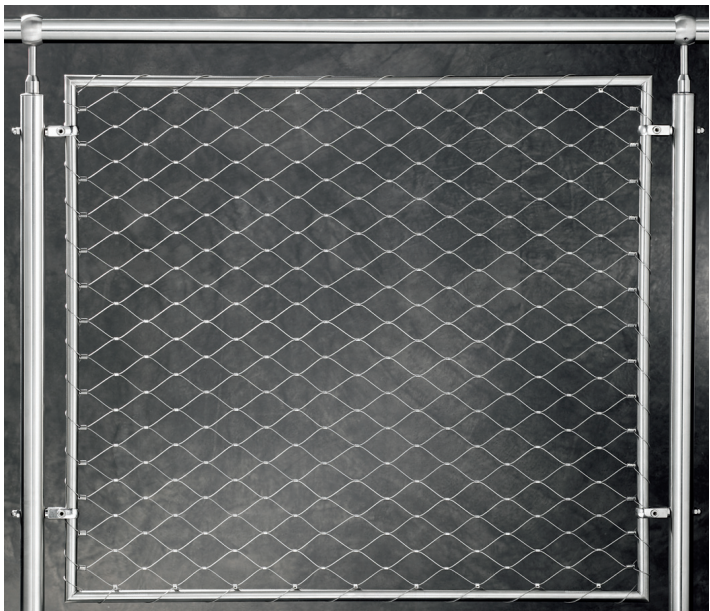


While architects and designers are focusing on the grand gestures—where to place a door, a stair, or a walk-in shower—the individual parts of those elements can be overlooked due to tight budgets or timeframes. But hardware components like handrails and doorknobs are crucial not only to a design's safety and function but also to its longevity. In the world of component hardware, manufacturers are upping their customizable options to cater to a range of indoor and outdoor needs, from high-traffic public spaces to high-design residences. And in the bath, often-neglected details like drains, grab bars, and even speaker covers are getting a modern makeover. From the front door to the kitchen cabinet, quality hardware always adds a luxury finish, while high-caliber components make a solid impression from the very first touch.

JENNIFER K. GORSCHÉ



1



2



3

CLOSE AT HAND

RAILINGS

Stair design is
moving up, and
expanding out.



4

1 ARCHITECTURAL MESH CAMBRIDGE ARCHITECTURAL

Cambridge Architectural offers full design, engineering, and collaboration services on a wide range of interior and exterior architectural mesh systems including stair railings and enclosures. The company recently introduced several new open-weave stainless steel mesh styles while continuing to offer classic patterns and attachment systems for a range of projects.

www.cambridgearchitectural.com

2 X-TEND2 CARL STAHL DÉCORCABLE

DecorCable's X-Tend2 line is a timesaving solution for interior and exterior balustrade applications. Mesh panels available up to 78 inches long and in heights of 28, 33, and 37½ inches are pre-installed on stainless steel frames. These attach to the company's universal mounting system, available for post, floor, wall, or handrail applications. Diagonal panels are available in a range of sizes.

www.decorable.com

3 SILHOUETTE RAILINGS FORMS+SURFACES

Silhouette pre-engineered railings integrate a range of options and materials usually only available for custom installations. Drawing from Form+Surfaces materials palette, the expanding line includes interior and exterior systems. Stainless rails can be specified with an embedded continuous LED light strip powered by low-voltage DC current. The lens assembly is weather resistant and can be angled depending on the desired effect.

www.forms-surfaces.com

4 LIGHT SYSTEM 8 GERA

Though not for use as a hand railing, Gera's Light System 8 is a light rail suitable for horizontal or vertical use. The aluminum luminaire has a variable width and hides technical components, emphasizing the adjustable screen, which is available in metal, translucent glass, or custom decorative options.

gera.publick.net



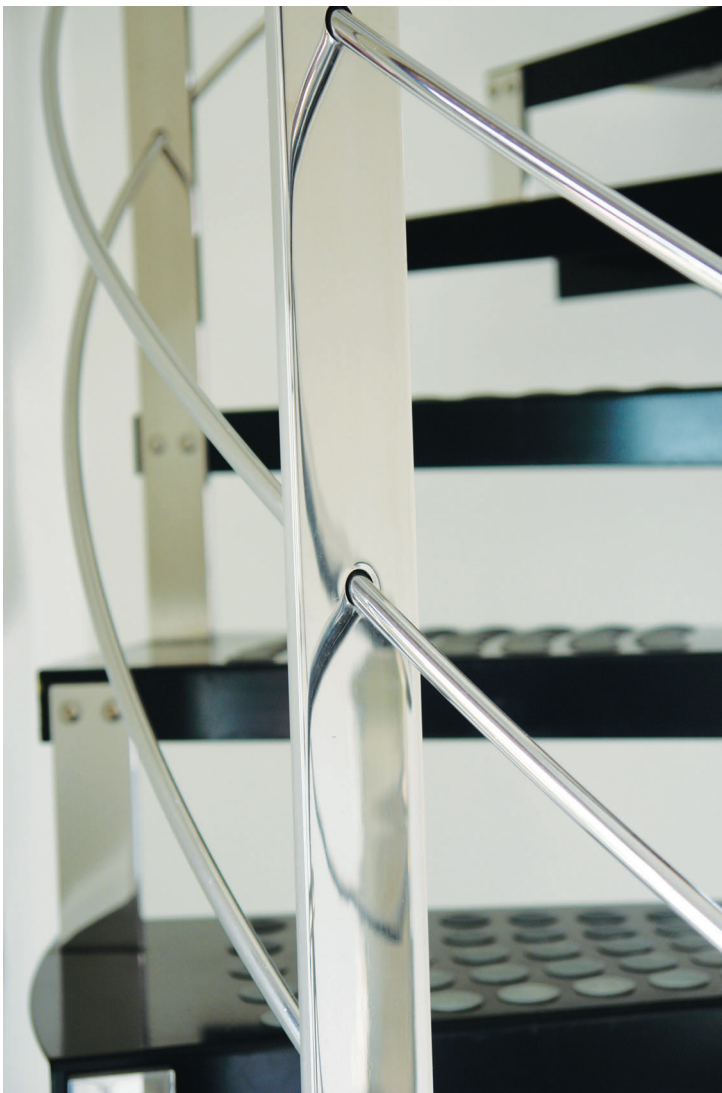
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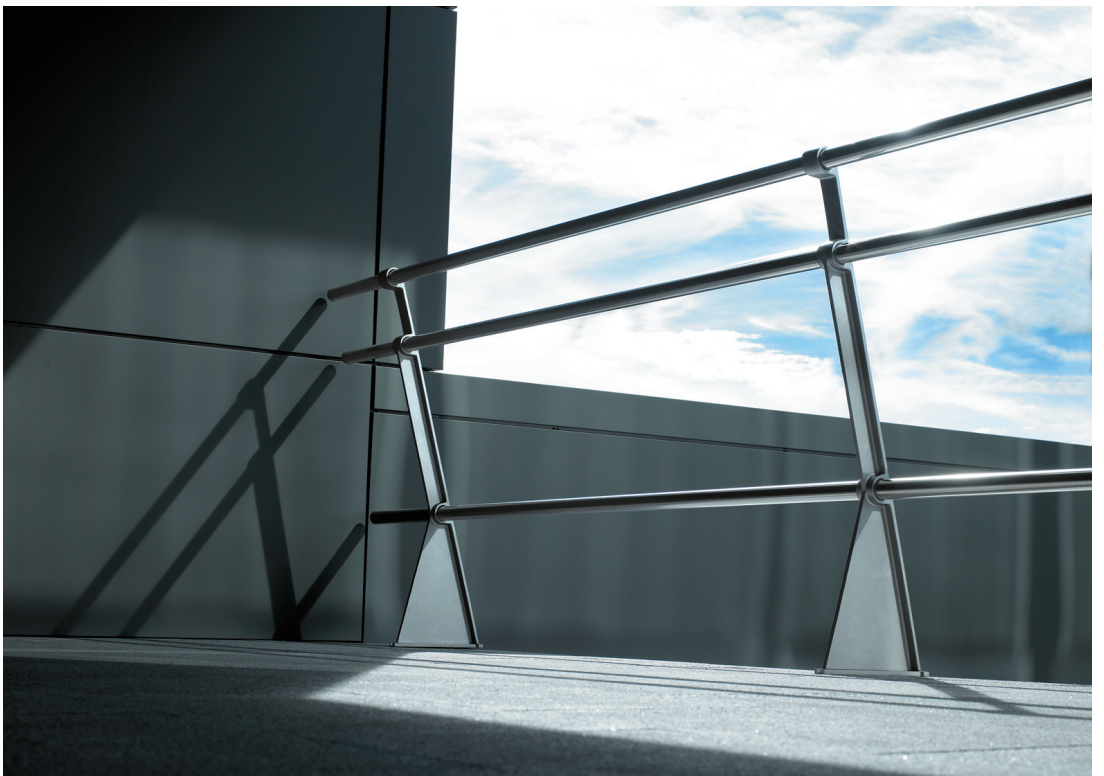
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5 BIKE-PULLWAY BICYCLE RAMP NEOMERCE

Until now there was no easy way to lug a bike up stairs. Korean company Neomerce has introduced a new solution, an anti-skid public bike ramp that allows bicyclists to safely roll their bike alongside a stair rail. Rounded edges prevent users from injury, while a narrow, extruded aluminum design leaves as much room as possible to pedestrians.

bike-pullway.com/en

6 ARTLINE BRUGG

Architectural rope manufacturer Brugg has created a line of outdoor accessories designed to fit with its range of high-grade steel railing systems via vertically adjustable rods. The modular system includes shelves, weatherproof lighting, birdbaths and bowls, and privacy screens. Attachment systems for steel handrails and glass railings are available.

www.brugglifting.com

7 LÍNEA HANDRAIL SANTA&COLE

Santa&Cole's line of outdoor urban elements includes the Línea handrail, a simple stainless steel line that serves the dual purpose of pedestrian barrier and resting place. Suitable for any public space where a subtle barrier is required without the visual obstruction of a full fence.

www.santacole.com

8 SLOPER HANDRAIL ONN OUTSIDE

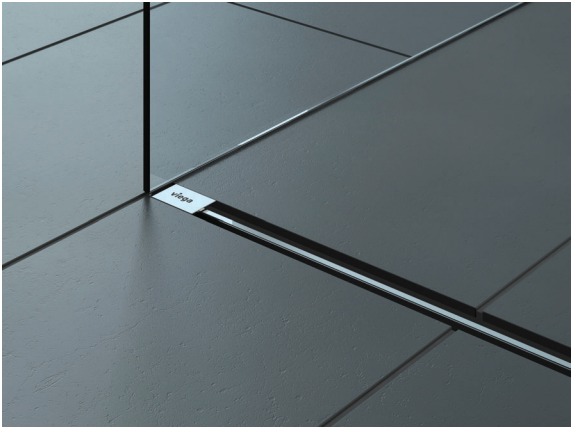
Contemporary street furniture manufacturer Onn's Sloper handrail is designed to complement the other elements of the angular Sloper line, including a lighting beacon, bollard, and fencing. Available in two heights, the cast aluminum post can be fitted with two or three stainless steel rails and an optional glass panel.

www.onnoutside.com

9 BESPOKE BALUSTRADES AND STAIRS EESTAIRS

Four-year-old company Ee stairs has developed a range of bespoke balustrade and stair designs for commercial and residential applications. Beginning with a patented 1m2 staircase that requires only one square meter of space, designers moved on to develop a range of designs including the FlatRhythm balustrade (pictured) with a horizontal infill of steel tubes or wire and (on page 23) the TransParency 1-06 balustrade.

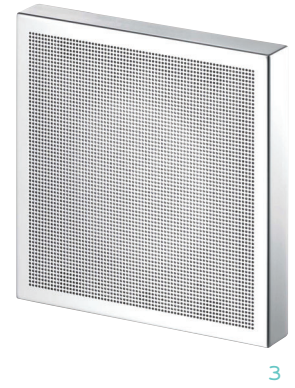
www.eestairs.com/en



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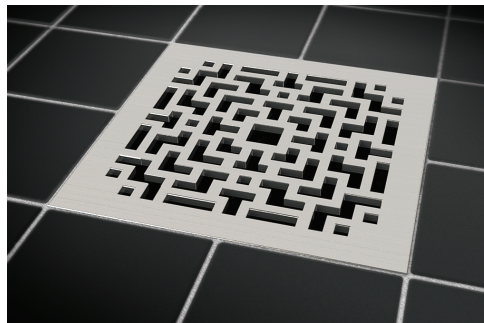
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6

DRAINS

Clean-lined drains and covers are better than invisible.

1 ADVANTIX VARIO SHOWER DRAIN VIEGA

The Vario drain's customizable length allows it to integrate seamlessly with the walls of enclosed shower areas. Suitable for new construction or renovation, the 47-inch basic channel can cut as short as 12 inches in length. Its recessed design is less than one inch wide, allowing for a nearly uninterrupted floor surface.

www.viega.com

2 ZENTRIX SHOWER DRAIN DALLMER

Partnering with the CeraNiveau drainage system from Dallmer, the rectangular Zentrix drain can drain more than 12 gallons of water per minute. Designed to eliminate the risk of flooding in level-access shower designs, a polymer concrete collar secures the drain in the screed while providing a solid bond for waterproofing beneath bath tiles.

www.dallmer.de/en

3 STARCK SPEAKER MODULE AXOR

The basis for Philippe Starck's Axor shower collection is the square—all elements in the line are derived from a 5-by-5-inch module. The high-performance watertight speaker module follows the formula with a 40-watt speaker encased in a sleek aluminum membrane with a rubber seal. Available in chrome or aluminum the unit is rated for indoor use only.

www.hansgrohe-usa.com

4 CERAMIC SHOWER DRAIN ROYAL MOSA

Netherlands-based tile producer Mosa recently released a ceramic shower drain that eliminates any visible stainless steel. Available in twelve finishes, the 6-by-36-inch drain is installed in combination with an Easy Drain shower channel leaving a barely visible drainage opening, less than half a centimeter thick, around its perimeter.

www.mosa.nl/us

5 SHOWER GRID DRAINS WATERMARK DESIGNS

Brooklyn-based Watermark Designs recently launched a new collection of six shower grid drains designed to complement contemporary or traditional baths. Drains are held in place with rare earth magnets, creating a clean finish without visible fasteners. The 5-by-5-inch grids are available in 37 finishes including polished chrome, antique brass, and charcoal.

www.watermark-designs.com

6 EMPIRE DRAIN PLUG WATERWORKS

A modern adaptation of late 19th-century styles, Waterworks' Empire collection includes a chain and plug waste drain. The drain includes a removable grate for cleaning and servicing. The hardware is designed to complement the company's Empire tub and is available in nickel (pictured), matte nickel, and chrome.

www.waterworks.com



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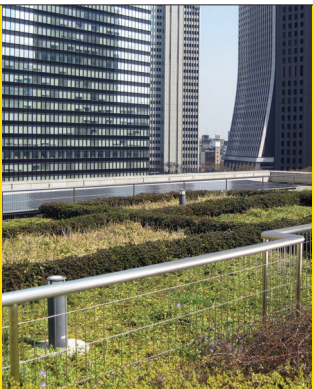
Contact Technical Glass Products (TGP)
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Pilkington Fire Protection Glass North America
www.pilkington.com/fire



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1 TED BOERNER
COLLECTIONS
ROCKY MOUNTAIN
HARDWARE

Artist and designer Ted Boerner has collaborated with Rocky Mountain Hardware to create five hardware collections. Cast in recycled, art-grade bronze, the collections include 27 pieces of hardware and cabinet pulls available in nine standard finishes. Pictured is the 12 $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch Shift grip shown in white bronze and brushed patina.

www.rockymountainhardware.com

2 FLUX
JADO HARDWARE

German manufacturer Jado's new Flux door handle has a seamless form made from a single piece of metal sculpted downward and affixed to a softly rounded square doorplate. Coupled with a durable chrome finish, the shape is made to resist dirt accumulation and complement a range of door styles.

www.jado-hardware.com
www.hafele.com/us

3 ROUND DOOR SET
REJUVENATION

Rejuvenation has added new exterior door hardware to its Mid-Century Modern Collection. Cast in iconic shapes from the 1950s and 60s, the collection includes square, star, and round (pictured) knobs designed to fit the Schlage Orb door set. Sets are made with solid brass and are available in three finishes: brushed chrome, polished chrome, and lacquered brass. Matching doorbell buttons are available.

www.rejuvenation.com

4 C CLASS
ARCHITREND

Compatible with most locks and latches, the C Class door handle is a patented design with a concealed tie-bolt and self-adjusting spindles. Approximate dimensions are 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 1 inch with a 2-inch depth. Constructed with solid brass and stainless steel components and three standard finishes, the knob is available in special finishes on request.

www.architrend.com.au

5 SANCTUARY KNOB
TOP KNOBS

Inspired by Asian architectural details, Top Knobs new Sanctuary collection of knobs and pulls emphasizes delicate details wrought so that they do not compromise durability. The full line is available in eight finishes including brushed satin nickel, flat black, German bronze, oil rubbed bronze, pewter antique, polished chrome (pictured), polished nickel, and Tuscan bronze.

www.topknobs.com

6 TALIESIN DESIGN
REVEAL DESIGNS

Designed in partnership with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Reveal's new Taliesin collection includes three series: Series 630 and 631 can be mixed and are available in 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ - or 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch round or rectangular pulls finished in stainless steel and beech, walnut, oil rubbed bronze, or as solid stainless pieces; Series 632 handles (pictured) have a solid wood and metal form and are available in three sizes.

www.reveal-designs.com

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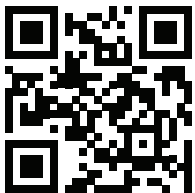


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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER AUGUST 17, 2011

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2011

AUGUST

THURSDAY 18
FILM

**The Cool School:
How Los Angeles Learned
to Love Modern Art**
(dir. Morgan Neville, 2007),
86 min.
The Museum of
Contemporary Art
250 South Grand Ave.
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

SATURDAY 20
EVENT

Visiting Watts Towers
11:00 a.m.
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

WITH THE KIDS

**'Museum of Me' Workshop
with Sussman/Prezja**
10:00 a.m.
Architecture and Design
Museum
6032 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.aplud.org

SATURDAY 27
EXHIBITION OPENING

**Less and More:
The Design Ethos of
Dieter Rams**
10:00 a.m.
San Francisco Museum of
Modern Art
151 3rd St.
San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

MONDAY 29
EVENT

**Mayor's Forum:
What is Your Vision for
San Francisco's Built
Environment?**
5:30 p.m.
The City Club of
San Francisco
155 Sansome St.
San Francisco
www.aiaf.org

WEDNESDAY 31
LECTURE

**Adapting Cities
for the Future**
9:00 a.m.
ULI Sacramento
915 I St.
Sacramento, CA
www.uli.org

SEPTEMBER

THURSDAY 1
EXHIBITION OPENING

Architecture of Consequence:
San Francisco
6:00 p.m.
AIA San Francisco
Center for Architecture +
Design Gallery
130 Sutter St.
San Francisco
www.aiaf.org

TUESDAY 6
EXHIBITION OPENING

**Global Perspectives:
Architecture Travel
Studios Group Exhibition**
10:00 a.m.
California College of the Arts
Tecoah and Thomas Bruce
Galleries
1111 Eighth St.
San Francisco
www.cca.edu

Reclaim Market Street!

6:00 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center Gallery
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
www.spur.org

WEDNESDAY 7
EXHIBITION OPENING

Faculty Exhibition
5:30 p.m.
California College of the Arts
Tecoah Bruce Gallery at
the Oliver Art Center
5212 Broadway
Oakland, CA
www.cca.edu

THURSDAY 8
EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Teaching Architecture:
3 Positions Made in
Switzerland**
6:30 p.m.
swissnex
730 Montgomery St.
San Francisco
www.swissnexsanfrancisco.org

Christian Marclay: Cyanotypes

10:30 a.m.
Fraenkel Gallery
49 Geary St.
San Francisco
www.fraenkelgallery.com

Nathan Oliveira:
A Memorial Exhibition

9:30 a.m.
Berggruen Gallery
228 Grant Ave., San Francisco
www.berggruen.com

SYMPOSIUM

**Energy Efficiency in
the Residential Sector:
Practice, Policy,
Prospects**

7:30 a.m.
University of California
Berkeley: College of
Environmental Design
2150 Allston Way
Berkeley, CA
www.ced.berkeley.edu

SATURDAY 10
EXHIBITION OPENING

Hammer Projects:
Sara Vanderbeek
11:00 a.m.
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
hammer.ucla.edu

EVENTS

Some City Angels

6:00 p.m.
Edward Cella
Art + Architecture
6018 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.edwardcella.com

Celebrate 2011:

The Wearable
7:00 p.m.
Architecture and
Design Museum
6032 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.aplud.org

WITH THE KIDS

Bike LACMA
Weekend

11:00 a.m.
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

TUESDAY 13
LECTURE

Regenerative Design
**Sandy Meddler,
Robert L. Thayer
and Sam Van der Ryn**
6:00 p.m.
654 Mission St.,
San Francisco
www.spur.org

WEDNESDAY 14
EVENT

Architecture Tour
10:15 a.m.
The J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

THURSDAY 15
LECTURESThe Bay Area's Modern
Landscape Legacy

1:00 p.m.
654 Mission St., San Francisco
www.spur.org

Graduate Studies Lecture

Series: Brenda Laurel
7:00 p.m.
California College of the Arts
1111 Eighth St., San Francisco
www.cca.edu

SATURDAY 17
FILM

SAH/SCC Film & Talk:
William Krisel, Architect
(dir. Jake Gorst, 2010) 85 min.
1:00 p.m.
Santa Monica Library
601 Santa Monica Blvd.
Santa Monica
www.smpl.org

WEDNESDAY 21
LECTURES

Philip Beesley:
Diffusive Architecture
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute
of Architecture
960 E 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

Joint Lecture: Merrill Elam
AIA East Bay Chapter
1405 Clay Oak, Oakland, CA
www.aiaeb.org

SYMPOSIUM

Forward Motion: Advancing
Mobility in California & Québec

11:30 a.m.
Art Center College of Design
1700 Lida St., Pasadena, CA
www.artcenter.edu

TUESDAY 27
EXHIBITION OPENING

Sympathetic Seeing:
**Esther McCoy and the
Heart of American Modernist
Architecture and Design**
6:00 p.m.
MAK Center
835 North Kings Rd.
West Hollywood, CA
www.makcenter.org

WEDNESDAY 28
LECTURE

Jesse Reiser:
Projections and Receptions
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute
of Architecture
960 E 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu



COURTESY LAGUNA ART MUSEUM

NOGUCHI: CALIFORNIA LEGACY

Laguna Art Museum
307 Cliff Drive
Laguna Beach, CA
Through October 2

Noguchi: California Legacy features three bodies of work that capture the connection Los Angeles-born sculptor Isamu Noguchi had with the California landscape. *California Scenario: The Courage of the Imagination* celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Segerstrom commission at the South Coast Plaza sculpture garden; a gallery is illuminated by Noguchi's famed Akari lights for the 1986 Venice Biennale in *What is Sculpture?*, shown above; and for *Noguchi at Gemini G.E.L.*, his sculpture for atelier Gemini G.E.L. Los Angeles in 1982 are reproduced as flattened steel plates, described by Noguchi as "short poems pertaining to California where I was born, and to the world I have known."



COURTESY FORT MASON CENTER/SEAM STUDIO

SEAT: AN OUTDOOR CHAIR SHOW

Fort Mason Center
38 Fort Mason
San Francisco
Through May 31, 2012

In collaboration with the Fort Mason Center, curators Topher Delaney and Kika Probst of Seam Studio challenged forty designers to create and build outdoor public seating that would reflect the waterfront site and be able to withstand year-round weather conditions in Northern California. The seats are displayed throughout selected areas of the thirteen-acre campus that is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Center. Each designer loaned their seat for free, and many firms created new partnerships for the project, such as Arup with Jefferson Mack Metal. *The West End Terminal Seat*, above, by Nilus Designs: Architecture was inspired by the natural ecology at Fort Mason, particularly the salty water and wind patterns.

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Photographs by Iwan Baan provide the backdrop for ten conversations about LA in *No More Play*.



LA STORY

No More Play:
Conversations on Urban Speculation in Los Angeles and Beyond
Michael Maltzan
Edited by Jessica Varner
USC/Hatje Cantz, \$50.00

Like the cosmos, Los Angeles seems so infinite and contradictory as to defy understanding. That hasn't stopped such writers as Cary McWilliams, Reynier Banham, Mike Davis, and Charles Jencks from offering ambitious overviews. Everyone has an opinion about LA,

sometimes memorable but usually negative. Orson Welles wrote it off as "a loose and sprawling confederation of shopping centers...with a downtown as metropolitan as Des Moines or Schenectady." In *Cities and People* Mark Girouard termed it, "a failed Jerusalem, a low-

density Babylon." Michael Maltzan has wisely framed his analysis as a symposium, conversing with ten individuals who share his concerns about the state of the metropolis and its future. All came from somewhere else, and this gives them a critical perspective and a stubborn optimism about the potential of this urban agglomeration. Photographer Iwan Baan complements their insights with a quirky collection of images that range from a trailer park in East LA to traffic stalled on the 405.

Maltzan has built SROs on Skid Row, mansions in Beverly Hills, and a park in Playa Vista, so he has first-hand experience of LA's diversity. He grew up back east in the Long Island suburb of Levittown

and remembers, "I was drawn to LA because it seemed real." Twenty years on, he can still muster enthusiasm for his adopted home. "As inhabitants of a city that is constantly confronting endless change, we possess an inherent creativity and ability to surprise the world with our urban inventiveness," he writes. "LA is now at a pivotal moment when its new identity is being determined"

Those themes recur throughout these conversations. There's consensus that LA is a great laboratory for urban investigation, especially of infrastructure, for in-between spaces, and communities that mutate with each new wave of immigration. There are also disagreements. James Flannigan, a business correspondent, calls LA the new Ellis Island, a portal to opportunity. Edward Soja, a UCLA professor of urban studies, deplores the extremes of wealth, but sees the heterogeneity as an opportunity for grass roots action. He cites the court victory of the Bus Riders' Alliance over the MTA, which diverted billions of

dollars into improving bus service for the city's poorest inhabitants. Sarah Whiting, an architectural professor at Rice, compares LA to Houston in its lack of a comprehensive plan. "People think the best idea in urbanism is a neighborhood," she remarks. "I think large-scale juxtapositions are far more interesting and applicable to contemporary cities."

No More Play is full of provocative insights, and it tries to spur fresh thinking without offering easy answers. We all construct personal maps of the cities we live and work in, focusing on the places we know and often losing sight of the larger whole. Carey McWilliams subtitled his study of Southern California, "An Island on the Land"—it's easy to relapse into insularity. This symposium offers a corrective. As Qingyun Ma, Dean of the USC School of Architecture observes, "Architects today realize that if they are not part of the urban voice, then...our practice will never sustain itself." **MICHAEL WEBB IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.**



IWAN BAAN

CORB'S CAR

Voiture Minimum: Le Corbusier and the Automobile
Antonio Amado
The MIT Press, \$49.95

To be honest, my budget hasn't included any of the twenty-six or so books devoted to Le Corbusier that have arrived in the last decade. More than two books a year would make anyone proud. But *Voiture Minimum: Le Corbusier and the Automobile* is something different. A few pages in, I realized that I'd been gulled. Corb is in there, but only as a walk-on. Built around a few scrappy sketches from the thirties, Antonio Amado manages to lasso an entire era in which the automobile, not architecture, represented the ultimate design challenge. Think about it. While we take the suburban zeitgeist of SUVs, ATVs, minivans and Rovers for granted, in the 1930s it looked as though it would be the automobile

that would transform cities. It would be the automobile that led material culture away from wood and rabbit glue, and it is the automobile that refined and popularized the formal language that today's Young Turks aspire to apply to their buildings. The tale of Le Corbusier trying to duke it out with the auto industry is a bit like a varsity wrestler trying to make it in the Ultimate Fight Cage. He simply lacked the chops.

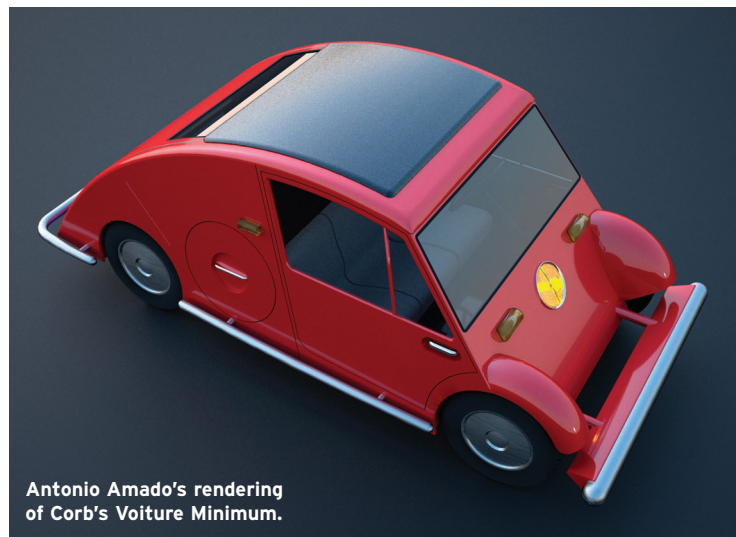
But he loved cars! Gatsby had nothing on Le Corbusier, at least when it came to fast machines. Voisin, the high-end automaker, was a friend and patron—witness the Voisin Plan—and then take a good look at the images of Corb's stable of sultry Voisins, with their long noses and dinner-plate wheels,

as they idle in front of Villa Garche, or lounge in the shadow of Villa Savoye. That car was the Bentley coupe of its day. It was enormous, stylish, extraordinarily well crafted, with rectilinear lines that conferred the status and breeding its well-heeled owners wished to declare. And it was about as far from a people's car as it could be. This is the image of Corb that the paparazzi would have devoured, the one with the bespoke car in place of the manifesto, the one with Josephine Baker perched on a running board, and product placement high on his agenda.

Streamlining was in the air when Le Corbusier visited America, where he toured Ford's assembly plant in Detroit and came back besotted with mass production. At that time automobiles were either hand-crafted and ponderous or down-market and basic. Designers and some brave architects around the world were jousting to introduce aerodynamic silhouettes that challenged the upright architectural profiles then in vogue. Ferdinand Porsche's People's Car, the Czech Tatra, and Gordon Buehrig's Cord Speedster

were beginning production, and Chrysler's Airflow was on the drawing boards. A competition for a low-cost automobile had just been launched by a consortium of producers, and even though it omitted architects from the roster of invitees, Le Corbusier wanted in. After all, Gropius had done it, and so had Loos, and it's clear from the tone of this letter that Le Corbusier had an itch he simply had to scratch:

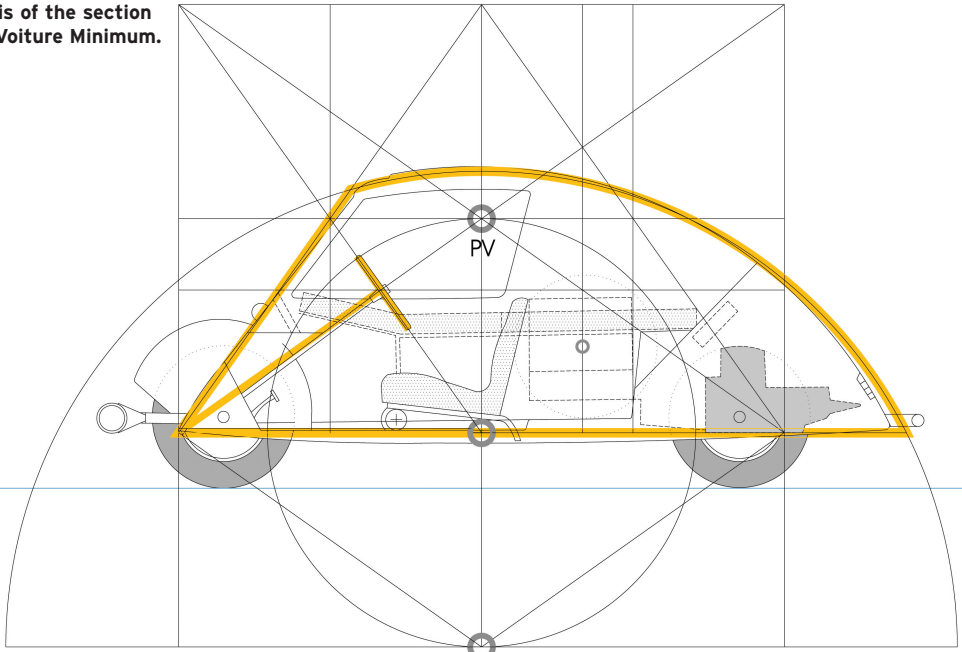
"I would be very pleased to design the body of such an automobile," he wrote. "I have been familiar with the question for many years and I am convinced that cooperation with automobile engineers would make it possible to develop an elegant model with class. If you are able to make this disclosure known to whoever is interested, I would appreciate it." But the letter was late, as the **continued on page 32**



Antonio Amado's rendering of Corb's Voiture Minimum.

COURTESY MIT PRESS

Analysis of the section of the Voiture Minimum.



CORB'S CARS continued from page 31 industry had already become established, and he found himself up against some very stiff competition. Amado beautifully reproduces plates of 78 entries by rivals, many featuring rear engines, earnest attempts at streamlining, a surprisingly agile juggling of features, and, *quel scandale*, a progressive industrial rather than architectural language. Viewing them as an ensemble, as a snapshot of the struggle to represent fluid (read sexy) forms with an engineer's

kit, I'm once again made aware of the hair-raising digital revolution we are witnessing today, and reminded of the incredible breakthrough embodied in pioneering designs like the Cisitalia. Le Corbusier, focused on the Modular and the harmony of intersecting lines with no Xenakis in sight, was caught off-guard. Lacking beziers and splines, locked into antideluvian T's and angles, he found himself far from the shells and airfoils he lauded in *Towards a New Architecture*. Nevertheless, he soldiered on,

eventually producing drawings for a strange, pug-nosed vehicle which would be right at home in Trey Parker's garage. Slab-sided, and aggressively Euclidian, with arcs and planes where his peers imagined aircraft-like swoops and ogee curves, it has all the charm of a self-propelled, home-built travel trailer. Interior room presses to the margins, barely acknowledging the running gear, popping the wheels half the way into the passenger compartment. As soberly utilitarian (it fairly shouts

"Home Depot!") as the Voisin is proud and majestic, the design is a tart reminder of the disconnect between Le Corbusier's rhetoric and his bid to personally enter the world of the industrialist. That world, at least on the surface, seemed willing to entertain his entreaties. Amado has unearthed fascinating letters politely shunting Corb to those the authors deem likely to collaborate, which, like a spurned lover, he pursues with increasing ardor. Between the lines, however, the message was blunt: architecture was fine for the estate, but not for the road. Conflicted? Indeed. This was an era in which the contesting forces of industrialization and elite culture were uneasy companions. Architects, noses in the air, were awash with grand illusions. Gropius shed his austere identity to build his very own bling-mobile, and Frank Lloyd Wright tooled around in a grand but off-putting Continental with portholes (the automotive equivalent of Johnson's Chippendale tower!). Fuller and Molino threw their hat in the ring, but, ultimately, there was no there there. It was up to a new breed of industrial designer—Norman Bel Geddes, under-the-radar William Stout, and of course Raymond Loewy—to crack the code that separated elite patronage from the all powerful consumer. Matter of fact, there is still no way to connect

the dots. The Citrohan House, the Lustron House, and the Wachsmann/Gropius Panel House all failed to work out the simple fact that the public eyeballs buildings but craves consumer goodies. Amado doesn't try, which is to his credit. Discussing the Citrohan House along with the Stein house, Amado avoids a mash-up by confessing that his passion for automobiles drove him to cross conceptual and academic boundaries, finally giving birth to a thesis that favors fervor for the subject over academic limits, and leaving us with the tantalizing thought that the automobile was the secret force behind Le Corbusier's urban vision. He gives us the goods, packaged in a in a generously designed format, which fills page after page with foolscap sketches (in color), and a remarkably astute collection of period photographs. Corbusian lore peppers the pages, sparked by the occasional well chosen *bon mot* and, above all, untainted by a whiff of undeserved authority. This book is clear and innocent, and the author is passionately devoted to his subject. Leafing through the reproductions of the competitor's drawings, I thought as Le Corbusier must have thought, perhaps for the first time, "*Merde*—all the good ideas are taken!" **CRAIG HODGETTS IS A PRINCIPAL AT HODGETTS + FUNG IN CULVER CITY, CA.**

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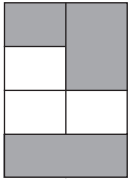
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THOMAS LOOF

TOO BIG TO FAIL

Danish architect Bjarke Ingels, founder of the upstart—and remarkably successful—firm BIG, sat down with ANWest Coast editor Sam Lubell while on a recent trip to Los Angeles.

You've certainly catapulted into elite status. You're the man of the hour here. How do you see this recognition?

I think moving to New York and opening an office there has given us more presence on this side of the Atlantic. It's amazing how big a divide the Atlantic is in terms of architecture. In Europe it's shocking how little you know about American architecture except maybe the Case Study Houses and the work of a select few like Frank Gehry. I think the same divide goes the other way. Being here now and starting to do stuff in the Americas has probably created a little more attention.

You describe your work as pragmatic utopian architecture. A combination of sculptural forms with practicality.

One of our latest ideological pursuits is the notion of hedonistic sustainability. What if sustainability actually becomes a way of increasing life quality? For example, in our waste to energy plant in Copenhagen we're using the sheer mass of a power plant to explore the fact that Copenhagen doesn't have the topography for skiing. By installing an elevator we can create a man-made ski slope and save people the eight-hour bus ride to Sweden. It's a decent hill, 350 meters tall, so you can actually do some serious skiing there. Factories aren't just places for work. They actually turn trash into electricity and can serve as a giant park.

A lot of people hope sustainable architecture will evolve and be more inspired. Do you think what

you're doing is the next evolution of sustainable architecture?

For quite a while the notion was that sustainability was so important that it had to happen at the expense of everything else—this Protestant idea that it has to hurt to do good. If everybody gets the idea that sustainable life is less fun than normal life then it becomes a very undesirable proposition. Who wants to opt for something less nice?

You have these formal plans that are very practical. In this day when everything moves so fast and attention spans are so short how do you fight the urge to focus too much on form?

I think the level of sobriety in our work is that we're committed to the fact that our buildings look differently because they perform differently. It's the spark that triggers the design. They respond to completely different conditions, they answer completely different questions, they solve different problems and they exploit different potentials. The architecture is less an expression of our preconception than it is an expression of the specific qualities or ideas that that project is pursuing. The Figure 8 building in Copenhagen looks like a distorted 8 because it allows the townhouses and the apartments to gravitate toward the sun and the view. It allows the commercial spaces to be as deep as they want to be. As a result you wind up getting this path that lets you bicycle all the way to the top of the building. The distorted skew of the building is not a result of some sort of craziness. It's a result of some very practical optimizations of the conditions for each program and the facilitation of this public invasion.

Some people complain that there's now a global style divorced from its region. Do you think that's a bad thing? Or do

you think it's more important to respond to the immediate site?

I think both are important. Each project needs to understand its climatic context, its cultural context, its urban context, its infrastructural context. A lot of our early work was dealing with the culture and the conditions of Copenhagen. As a result it's a series of projects that try to develop the local typologies one step further. Now that we're doing projects in Shanghai and Shenzhen and Astana and Athens and Hamburg and Stockholm and New York and Vancouver and maybe in LA, we're having some interesting conversations. Each time it's an opportunity to understand the possibilities and the limitations of the specific urban typologies and of the local lifestyle and culture.

A lot of architectural discourse is run in academia. Sometimes it can be removed from the constraints and realities of everyday life. Do you think academia can have too large a role in the discourse of architecture?

I think when academia is too removed from the actual conditions that architecture faces, it loses its role. I think the interesting thing is of course the overlap (between academia and practice). Essentially I'm always trying to use academia as a way of, at a slower pace, pursuing ideas that interest our office in general.

Who have been your biggest influences?

An incredible amount of architects have been very inspirational. Right now I'm reading Buckminster Fuller's *Oblivion*. And Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture*. A major part of the book is talking about building closets and stuff like that; it's so down and dirty pragmatic. It's got a blatant proposition of: don't look at all these different elements of art history and architectural history; look at organizing the practicalities of human life. Look at the movements of the housewife through the kitchen and use that as the driving point of your design. Which back then must have seemed ridiculously profane.

In the U.S. a lot of architecture is driven by developers. Do you have thoughts on how architects can return to prominence in terms of getting their role back as the leaders in building?

By addressing issues that actually matter to people in general. By actually making sense. I think essentially the idea of the starchitect as the creative genius that makes weird and impossible and spectacular stuff has been good in the sense of creating a popular appeal for architecture. Projects like the Guggenheim Bilbao and

Walt Disney Concert Hall have really achieved that. And I think the good thing about the star system is it makes people attracted to something at first because of something maybe superficial, but eventually they'll develop a more profound interest. It's probably been not so constructive in the sense that it created the idea that architects are people you call if you have an absurd amount of money and you want a lot of attention. You can actually create some kind of crazy icon that is technically difficult and expensive to realize, but it will put your city and its new icon on the cover of the international media. But you wouldn't really call an architect if you wanted to solve a problem. I think [it's about] reacquiring that trust to be somebody who can actually turn all the real concerns and demands of people into interesting propositions for future cities and buildings.

Your firm has built a lot of work recently. But with the amount of notoriety you've received and the scope of commissions you're now receiving, there may be questions about your ability to match your current recognition with accomplishments. Are you worried about being what some called Zaha and Rem before they started building a lot—the so-called "paper architects?"

We started building quite early. Our first building commission was the VM House, a 250,000-square-foot apartment building that we got through the luck of running into a developer who actually had the courage to give us this commission based on the trust that we developed in the design process. This was at a point when we had not even built a dog house.

We've been very committed to real world issues and building from day one. We never did wonderful and impossible oil paintings. I think in that sense the project always starts with the performance of the building, and then it explores "what experience does the performance generate?"

For some the greatest innovation in architecture is being able to bridge disciplines—visual arts, sciences, new media, technology—and new ways of thinking. It seems like that's something you've been able to exploit, the multi-disciplinary approach.

I think the fact that given architects never build for themselves but for everybody else, we always need to—in the design process—plug in intelligence from these different professions. Architecture gets informed by the various specialists who actually have the requirements that we need to incorporate into the architecture. We need to somehow be able to communicate

these ideas to the outside world. If you can't relay your ideas to the clients, to the consultants, to the city architects, to the politicians, to the neighbors, to the community board, it will never get built. In that sense you really need to exercise a discipline that allows you to transmit ideas across the boundaries of professions.

I read you didn't always want to be an architect? So you have sort of an outside perspective.

My family is completely devoid of architects. I wanted to be a graphic novelist originally. I enrolled in the Royal Danish Art Academy. The Architecture school was the easiest one to get in. Then I had a plan that once I hatched out how to do it, I would return to my original trajectory of becoming a graphic novelist. Then I sort of got sidetracked for 15 years. Then with the publication of *Yes Is More* we found a way back into graphic novels, just a different kind than originally envisioned.

You came out of Rem's office. Are there any areas that you strongly part ways with him in outlook?

Obviously I learned a lot there. I think he's a great writer and architect. He is evidently the Le Corbusier of our times. I think we have a radically different atmosphere in the [BIG] office. I think the social conditions are quite different and probably more Scandinavian at BIG.

My reading of Rem's work is probably different than everybody else. But often people see something dark and cynical in OMA's work. Whereas our work is never really ironic. It is this idea of turning pleasing into a radical agenda. Having this sunny social and environmental outlook on things. Instead of having a discourse that is negatively driven having one that is positive. I like the Schopenhauer quote that you can do what you want, but you cannot want what you want. Each project has a propensity to become something, and if you try to force it into becoming something else you'll ruin its potential. And it's the same way with an architectural practice. We couldn't really choose to be anything other than what we are.

Do you have any dream projects?

Right now I'd love to do something in LA. We're actually having two interesting conversations here right now. What I'm interested in is the fact that the climate here is the climate in the world that is most suited for human life. It is the climate in the world where you actually have the least need for buildings in order to live. So therefore it holds an incredible potential for a radical approach to sustainability, because you hardly need the building.



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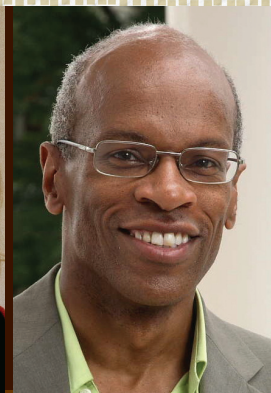
Charles Montgomery



John King, Hon. ASLA



Diana Balmori, ASLA



The Hon. Maurice Cox



Andres Duany, FAIA



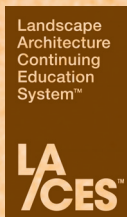
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